

THE MISSIONARY EVANGEL



EDWIN D. MOUZON



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THE MISSIONARY EVANGEL

THE FONDREN LECTURES

MR. AND MRS. W. W. FONDREN, members of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Houston, Texas, gave to Southern Methodist University on May 10, 1910, a fund, the proceeds from which were to be used in the establishment of the FONDREN LECTURES on Christian Missions. The following paragraph from the conditions of the original gift will set forth the spirit and purpose of the Foundation:

"The interest on the investment shall be used annually in procuring some competent person to deliver lectures on Christian Missions under the auspices of Southern Methodist University. This fund is dedicated to the foundation of a lectureship on Christian Missions in consideration of other donations made for the upbuilding of Southern Methodist University, and especially the School of Theology thereof, and in the hope that something of good may come directly therefrom and that others more able to give largely may be inspired to devote some portion of the means which they hold in trust as stewards of the Lord to the increase of said fund or to some other laudable enterprise of our Church."

THE MISSIONARY EVANGEL

THE FONDREN LECTURES FOR 1925, DELIVERED
BEFORE THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
SOUTHERN METHODIST
UNIVERSITY

BY
EDWIN DUBOSE MOUZON

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To My Friend

FRANK SEAY

GENTLEMAN, SCHOLAR, CHRISTIAN

Professor in the School of Theology

Southern Methodist University

1915-1919

"GOD'S FINGER TOUCH'D HIM, AND HE SLEPT"

PREFACE

It so happened that in the spring of the present year it was my great privilege to deliver the FONDREN LECTURES at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, and also to give the COLE LECTURES at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. In the COLE LECTURES I have discussed the social aspects of the gospel; in the FONDREN LECTURES I dealt with the personal aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The COLE LECTURES are published under the title, "*The Program of Jesus*," and I may be permitted to suggest to any who have the patience to read the FONDREN LECTURES for 1925, that they should read also the COLE LECTURES for the present year. The personal gospel is not the whole of the evangel; neither is the social gospel all there is in the Christian message. It requires both the one and the other if New Testament Christianity is to be presented in its entirety. A note similar to this serves as the preface to the COLE LECTURES for 1925.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation of the opportunity given me by the Faculty of the School of Theology of Southern Methodist University to bring out of the experience and meditation of a life-time this message to the missionaries, the ministers, and the members of my Church—and I trust, also, to a much wider public.

EDWIN DuBOSE MOUZON.

Nashville, Tennessee, April 27, 1925.

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EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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LECTURE I
THE EVANGEL AND THE BIBLE

**"Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come unto me that ye may have life."
(John 5: 39, 40.)**

LECTURE I

THE EVANGEL AND THE BIBLE

THE Christian missionary who goes to distant lands, goes carrying in his hand the Holy Bible. What shall he say to people of other faiths about this Sacred Book? And what shall the preacher and teacher here in the home land say to men about the Bible?

"The Evangel" and "the Bible"—I have set these two words down side by side, and in doing this have, by implication, given my answer to the question I have just asked. *The Bible contains the Evangel*. We are interested in the Bible because it does contain the Evangel. We present it to the world for the one and only reason that it is the Holy Book containing the message of God's grace.

Let this be kept in mind, and many difficulties touching the Scriptures will immediately disappear.

I

Our supreme interest, then, is in the Evangel. *Evangel*, as everybody knows, is the Greek word for Gospel. Gospel means "good news." The Evangel is more than "good advice"; it is "good news"—good news about *Man* and *God* and

Christ and Salvation. For this reason, we hold sacred the writings contained in the Bible.

Evangelical Christians ought never to forget that it was exactly this that made the Bible precious to the Reformers—men who hazarded their lives, and many of whom died, to give the Sacred Scriptures to the common people in their own language. “God Himself,” says Martin Luther, “speaks with us in the Holy Scriptures.” In the Bible, the great Reformer saw “God drawing near to men in Christ Jesus, and declaring to us, in Him, His will for our salvation.” Says Bishop Westcott: “This intense sense of the personal character of Holy Scripture was more or less characteristic of the whole period” of the Reformation. This view came out of the living experience of Luther and those associated with him. At Erfurt, John Nathin had said to his perplexed pupil: “Brother Martin, let the Bible alone; read the old teachers; reading the Bible simply breeds unrest.” But Brother Martin continued to read, and found God. And precisely this is what the Bible became to all the Reformers, namely, a book wherein a man may read, and hear God’s voice, and find Him. “Mediæval theologians looked at the Bible as a sort of spiritual law book, a storehouse of divinely communicated knowledge, of doctrinal truths and rules for moral conduct—and nothing more. The Reformers saw in it a new home for a new

life within which they could have intimate fellowship with God Himself—not merely knowledge about God, but actual communion with Him.”¹

The Reformers had much to say about “the witness of the Holy Spirit” (*testimonium Spiritus Sancti*). “Just as God Himself makes us know and feel the sense of pardon in an inward experience by faith which is His own work, so they believed that by an operation of the same Spirit believers were enabled to recognize that God himself is speaking to us authoritatively in and through the words of Scripture.”

As the Gallican Confession (A.D. 1559) puts it: “We know these books to be canonical, and the sure rule of our faith, not so much by the common accord and consent of the Church, as by the testimony and inward illumination of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to distinguish them from other ecclesiastical books upon which, however useful, we cannot found any articles of faith.”²

The Scotch Confession (A.D. 1560) says the same thing in a more vigorous way: “We affirme, therefore, that sik as allege the Scripture to have na uther authoritie bot that quhilk it hes received from the Kirk, to be blasphemous against God, and injurious to the trew Kirk,

¹ Lindsay's “Reformation,” Vol. I., page 455.

² Schaff's “Creeds of Christendom,” Vol. III., page 361.

quhilk alwaise heares and obeyis the voice of her awin Spouse and Pastor bot takis not upon her to be maistress over the samin.”³

It is altogether probable that Mohammedanism exercised a larger influence over the thought of the Mediæval Church than we have been accustomed to suppose. At any rate, the mechanical view of divine inspiration which is the view of the Roman Catholic Church, is seen fully expressed in the attitude taken by the followers of Mohammed toward the Koran. Let me quote Gwatkin:

“If man has no likeness to God, the right inference is that he can have no knowledge of God at all; but Mohammed concluded that he can have only such knowledge as God has been pleased to give him directly; and this is practically summed up in the Koran and the traditions. Now, the Koran cannot be worthy of God unless its inspiration is a mechanical communication of words and letters, and of pronunciation. . . . Such is the Koran. It is not a *record* of revelation like the Bible: it *is* the revelation.”⁴

It was precisely against this mechanical view of inspiration that the Reformers uttered their mighty protest. It is to be feared, however, that many of us have wandered far from this

³ Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom," Vol. III., page 464.

⁴ "The Knowledge of God," II., page 121.

spiritual view of the Bible. It is certain that some Protestants have lapsed back into the mechanical way of looking at the Scriptures which has been the bane of Romanism. When properly understood, the saying of Chillingworth that "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants" "is profoundly significant. But to "put the Bible in the place of the Pope"—this is altogether to pervert the evangelical principle, and, as Saint Paul would say, "to fall away from grace."

The Roman Catholic view of Scripture has resulted in endless difficulty. The Old Testament certainly has not the same value for Christians as the New Testament. Even in the New Testament certain books are less valuable than others. As for the Old Testament, there are many things in it that, on the theory that one book in the Bible is as valuable as another if we could only discover the hidden meaning of it, have to be tortured in divers and sundry ways to yield up their Gospel message—as for instance the long lists of genealogies, the complex furniture of the temple, the Song of Solomon, not to refer to the simple recital of stories of men and women and interesting details of national history. And so the Church of Rome resorted to its fourfold sense—*literal*, *moral*, *allegorical*, and *anagogic*. One does not wonder that the Church of Rome maintains that only the Church can interpret

the Bible. But we come to very much the same thing when we reduce the Old Testament and the New to a common level, and think of the Bible chiefly as a book in which to find texts, it matters not from whence taken, to support a previously formed theological system and confound our adversaries.

This has been the fatal fault with many writers of systems of dogmatic theology. They have lacked the historical and experimental viewpoint. They have not appreciated the fact that the Bible is a great book of religious experience. To them the Bible has been too much like the Koran—an *objective and final authority to coerce the minds of men*. I fully agree with James Denney:

“Where the human mind is concerned, it is idle to speak of an authority which can simply be imposed. There neither is, nor can be, any such thing. The real question is whether there is an authority which can impose itself, which can freely win the recognition and surrender of the mind and heart of man.”⁵

I cannot forbear, in this connection, quoting a passage of profound insight from the pages of Gwatkin’s “The Knowledge of God”—a passage singularly appropriate just at the present time:

“Broadly speaking, Jewish particularism,

⁵ “Studies in Theology,” pages 221, 222.

legality, and traditionalism are represented in Christian thought by the religion of the natural man which has always commanded a majority in Christendom, and is deemed authoritative by those who worship majorities for want of a reason for their belief. . . . He looks back to the majestic memory of a revelation given once for all, a visible church set up once for all, with a sacred trust of laws and ordinances to be maintained against a wicked world. He is the materialist of Christian thought, as firmly convinced as any unbeliever that the Gospel works contrary to Nature and reason. So he looks for its evidence in breaches of natural order, finds the grace of heaven in sacraments and mysteries outside the domain of reason, and waits for salvation in the horrors of the Lord's return, when He shall overthrow like Sodom a world beyond His power to redeem."⁶

The other and more spiritual type of mind, "having caught with more success the eternal meaning claimed for the Lord's Person, as the infinite and final revelation of the truth of this world and of the other, . . . lives by a growing revelation and a growing knowledge of an ever-living Person whose kingdom ruleth over all, but only by the appeal of love divine

⁶ "The Knowledge of God," Vol. II., pages 56-58.

to the image of God in man. He is the idealist of Christian thought, who sees in reason and Nature no mirage of hellish magic, but shadows of the eternal truth incarnate in the Son of Man. So he looks for the evidence of the Gospel in its revelation of this world's true estate and order, sees the grace of heaven in every work that is done on the wide earth for love and duty, and looks for life eternal here and now, not simply as the result of some far-off divine catastrophe. In a word, the one believes the Gospel because it contradicts Nature and reason; the other, because that which hath been made, in him was life, and the life was the Light of men."⁷

These things are mentioned and these principles are stressed here and now, because in these post-war days, during which so many things have been unsettled and upset, we find in Protestantism a recrudescence of the mechanical notion of inspiration and a revival of the Romish view of external religious authority.

Indeed, the leaders in this backward movement are quite outspoken in affirming their spiritual kinship with essential Romanism. Professor Machen, for instance, writes as follows:

"How great is the common heritage which unites the Roman Catholic Church, with its maintenance of the authority of Holy Scripture and with its acceptance of the great early creeds,

⁷ "The Knowledge of God," Vol. II., pages 56-58.

to devout Protestants to-day!" "The gulf is profound," he says, "that separates Protestants from Roman Catholics." But he adds: "Profound as it is, it seems *almost trifling* compared to the abyss which stands between us and many ministers of our own Church."⁸

Also, S. G. Craig affirms his intellectual and spiritual affinity with Roman Catholicism. In an article in the January, 1923, *Princeton Review*, he writes: "The main line of cleavage through Christendom no longer follows denominational lines, does not even follow the line between Catholics and Protestants. It follows the line between those who are Christians and those who merely call themselves Christians."

And even Mrs. Caroline Atwater Mason, in her worth-while story, "The High Way," in which she makes a much-needed plea for the preaching and teaching of a sound Evangelical faith, pauses to make her bow to the principle of authority as held by Rome when she has one of her characters to say: "The principle of religious authority safeguarding the Bible and its divine revelation, becomes an imperative necessity. One Church alone upholds this principle. I am to be received into the Catholic Church a few days hence in the city of New York. I see no other way."⁹

⁸ "Christianity and Liberalism," page 52.

⁹ "The High Way," page 239.

How far is all this from Evangelical Christianity! "To the Reformers the chief function of Scripture was to bring Jesus Christ near us; and as Jesus always fills the sphere of God to them, the chief end of Scripture is to bring *God* near *me*—not doctrine, but promise (for apart from promise, as Luther said unweariedly, faith does not exist); not display of God's thoughts, but God himself as my God. This manifestation of God which is recorded for us in the Scriptures, took place in an historical process coming to its fullest and highest in the incarnation and historical work of Christ, and the record of the manifestation has been framed so as to include everything necessary to enable us to understand the declaration of God's will in its historical context and its historical manifestation." ¹⁰

In a word, the Scriptures were precious to the Reformers because in them they heard sound the very "word of God." This "word of God" is "that wherein God utters unto us His mercy in Christ, and assureth us of His love toward us." The sum and substance of the "word of God" is "that our Lord Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, has revealed to us the will of the Heavenly Father, and with His innocence has redeemed us from death." "It is the sum of God's commands,

¹⁰ See Lindsay, "History of the Reformation," Vol. I., page 460.

threatenings, and promises, and above all the offer of Christ to us.”¹¹

The missionary, therefore, goes to the people who have not heard of Christ, taking in his hand the Holy Bible, because the Bible contains the “Evangel,” the “Gospel,” the “word of God,” the “message of God’s grace.” He goes to teach Christ, to offer Christ as the one hope of a lost world. Let him keep this fact ever in mind and he will know how to use his Bible.

A leaf out of the experience of the Rev. E. Stanley Jones, D.D., Missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in India, says exactly what I have been trying to say:

“When I first went to India, I was trying to hold a very long line. I was trying to hold the line clear from Genesis to Revelation, on to Western civilization and the Christian Church. There was no well-defined issue. The non-Christian invariably pitched the battle at Moses or at Western civilization. He always seemed to get away from the central thing.

“Then I saw that I could shorten my line, that I could refuse to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified, to take my stand there and make him the sum total of the aim and the motive of my message.

¹For the best discussion of this subject, see Lindsay, “History of the Reformation,” Vol. I., pages 553–567.

"Then it seemed that things cleared when we took the one central thing—that we were not there to make them pale copies of the West, we were there to respect anything that was fine in their civilization, in their struggle upward after God; we were there not to wipe out that struggle, but we were there to give them a Person—that Person, Christ. We asked them to interpret that Person through their own genius and national past and express him in such a way that it might be living, first-hand, and real.

"Then the issue began to clear. May I say this—that up to that time in India we seemed to have been up against a stone wall. Christian missions seemed to have come up to a certain place in the thinking of the educated mind. We were making great progress among the outcasts, but we were scarcely making any progress among the educated classes; but when we clarified the issue, and made this the one issue, then there was a new burst of power."¹²

This brings me to say a thing that is greatly needed to be said at the present time. The central thing in the Bible is the Evangel. The Bible exists to convey the Gospel. The Bible should be used for this one thing, that the

¹²Address delivered at the Missionary Convention, Washington, D. C., January 29, 1925.

Gospel of the Son of God may be given to the world. We need a proper understanding of relative values. We need to distinguish the things that differ. We must learn to put first things first. When we determine "not to know anything but Jesus Christ and Him crucified," then we have the proper avenue of approach. Then we shall be able to present the Gospel, and to present it in such a way as will carry along with it everything else in the Bible that ought to be carried. Christ makes the whole Bible luminous.

II

We are now in possession of the proper method of approach under the guidance of which we shall be able wisely to study the Bible and present it to others.

To state plainly what has been all the time in the background of our thinking and must now be made explicit: The Christian religion rests on a twofold foundation—a foundation of *History* and a foundation of *Experience*. The Bible must be trustworthy in this twofold way. It must present a reliable account of the great Facts of Redemption and must also give a record of Religious Experiences which may be verified by Christian people to-day and always. For the Bible to be the bearer of the Evangel,

these two things, therefore, are required—a *trustworthy History* and *verifiable Experience*.

When I say "trustworthy history," I mean *trustworthy* as regards the great facts of Redemption. By "the Facts of Redemption" I mean not only the *Incarnation*, the *Death*, and *Resurrection* of our Lord; I mean, also, in general, the *story of the preparation of the Hebrew Race as the people through whom Christ should be given to the world*.

The Bible, then, is the record of God's progressive revelation in human history. It is a witness to what God has done for men, and a promise of what he is yet going to do. The Bible is also the classic book of religious experience, and the standard and norm by which we measure our own. This is what gives it such spiritual significance and abiding worth. "The Bible is the expression, the objective capture, of man's entire subjective life. Our inner world is subtle and flashing; our finest moods are often as evasive as the delicate perfume of a wild flower; after they are gone we can hardly believe that we had them at all. But when we read the Bible we are certain that we had such moods, for there they all are, caught in God's Word as minutely as a mirror catches the lines of a face. Thus the Bible serves not only to nourish the Christian experience with rich facts and doctrines, but also as a sort of Christian memory, to hold and

keep real to us, all that has taken place in our inner life." ¹³

1. *We make very brief reference to the Old Testament, not for want of recognition of its permanent and priceless value, but in order to hold things in proper proportion in our discussion of the Evangel and the Bible.*

The Old Testament is the story of the preparation of the race for the coming of Christ. It is, of course, more than that: It is the record of what God was actually doing to save men by mighty acts and through illumined teachers. But it must not be read as if Christ had not come. For Christ has come. This fact gives profound significance to all that went before. This fact of Christ, furnishes the light in which all that went before is to be read. Christ throws light *backward* on Old Testament History as well as *forward* on all that comes after Him. In His light we see light everywhere. There is a divine teleology in the Old Testament—a labor working toward an end—and to ignore or deny it, is to be indifferent to the facts of history. When the fullness of time had come, God spoke unto us in His Son. And then, going back to the Old Testament Scriptures, we find there also—in the narratives of the Historians, in the teachings of the Lawgivers, in the hymns of the Psalmists, in the instructions of the Wise Men, and in the

¹³ Curtis, "The Christian Faith," page 171.

forth-telling and fore-telling of the Prophets—truths which wake to perish never, and which have their perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Furthermore—and this point needs to be stressed—the Old Testament must not be neglected. It contains the history of God's education of the race. Through the gradual stages therein described, God led mankind up to the coming of Jesus. And both in the education of our own children and in the evangelization of other peoples, the Old Testament will be found indispensable. The education of the race is summed up in the education of a child. The child passes through all the gradual stages of racial growth and development. For this reason the telling of Old Testament stories, such as the Fall of Man, the Call of Abraham, the account given of Jacob and Esau, the inimitable story of Joseph—and others too numerous to mention—makes an indelible impression on the minds of children. Experienced missionaries tell how the Old Testament stories are of utmost importance for the Christianizing of non-Christian peoples. Learned lectures about the Nature and Character of God will get no audience. But men will listen to an account of the mighty acts of the Living God. Just as human persons are known by their acts, so God is made known by his deeds. Missionary preaching, therefore, will begin with

the proclamation of the deeds of God; it will narrate what God has done. Later will come explanation and interpretation.

And just so should the Bible, as the bearer of the Evangel, be used in Christian lands. It is to be feared that we have lost much out of our lives, and that our children are lacking in a certain robustness of Christian character, through the too common neglect of the Old Testament both in the Home and in the Church. The Old Testament must, of course, be made to lead up to Christ and culminate in Him. And Christ, Himself, should be presented as the Doer of Mighty Deeds. Facts and acts make their own way and carry their own meaning. It is an observation made by many others besides poets that doctrine presented in reasoned argument often completely fails—

“When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.”

It was of the Old Testament, let it be remembered, that Saint Paul was writing when he said:

“Every Scripture since it is inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”¹⁴

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17.

2. *We pass now to a consideration of the Four Gospels as giving the account of the Ministry and Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

During the past century the first three Gospels, bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have come to be distinguished from the Fourth Gospel by the epithet, "synoptical." This implies that these three Gospels are so much alike that they may be spoken of and studied together.

Without doubt, Mark is the earliest of the three. The well-known statement of Papias that "Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote carefully, though not in order, as he remembered them, the things spoken and done by Christ," is confirmed by a study of the book itself. The Gospel according to Mark, therefore, goes back to the teaching and preaching of the Apostle Peter.

The problem of Matthew is more difficult. The earliest tradition is that "Matthew wrote the *logia* (the sayings) in the Hebrew and each interpreted them as he could." Prof. A. B. Bruce suggests (I mention it for what it may be worth) that for this very purpose Jesus may have called the publican, Matthew. "In his old occupation he would be accustomed to writing, and it might be Christ's desire to utilize that talent for noting down things worthy of record. The gift would be most in demand in connection

with the teaching of the Master. The use of the pen at the moment might be necessary." It is certain, however, that as the Gospel now stands, it has utilized not only these recorded sayings of Jesus, but also the substance of Peter's vivid recollections as preserved by Mark.

Luke comes later. His carefully written preface indicates the origin of his Gospel:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them into us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."

Luke was the friend and traveling companion of Saint Paul. His viewpoint is the broad, missionary viewpoint of the Apostle to the Gentiles. He was not an eye- or ear-witness of the things concerning which he writes, but he had association with those who were. Besides this, many had already begun to write about the things Jesus said and did, and Luke had before him their writings. He certainly had the Gospel according to Mark before him. He doubtless had access also to the sources the Gospel ac-

according to Matthew uses for its record of the teachings of Jesus. The Church, the world, is fortunate in having among the New Testament writers such a careful historian as Luke—and blessed in having his Gospel, “the most beautiful book in the world.”

The case of the Fourth Gospel is quite different. In recent years the question of its authorship has been much debated. It remains, however, that more can be said in favor of the Johannine authorship than of any other position. No modern solution of this problem is quite so satisfactory as the oldest, namely, that “last of all, John perceiving that the bodily (or external) facts had been set forth in the (other) Gospels, at the instance of his disciples and with the inspiration of the Spirit composed a spiritual Gospel.”

In reading the Fourth Gospel, one thing must be kept in mind: John had long meditated on the words of Jesus; he had preached sermons drawing out the meaning and implication of these words. All things had passed through the medium of his own mind. It is, therefore, often very difficult—and sometimes quite impossible—to tell just where John’s words end and the words of Jesus begin. It is certain that in many places Saint John is not quoting Jesus literally. This consideration goes far toward explaining the difference between the sayings

of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptics and the discourses as recorded in John's Gospel.

Concerning the net results of the modern historical criticism of the Gospels, it will suffice to quote the language of Prof. George John Romanes, a distinguished scientist who worked his way back from atheism to faith in God:

"Prior to the new Biblical science, there was really no rational basis in thoughtful minds either for the date of any of the New Testament books or consequently for the historical truth of any one of the events narrated in them. Gospels, Acts, Epistles were all alike shrouded in uncertainty. Hence the validity of eighteenth-century skepticism. But now all this kind of skepticism has been rendered obsolete, and forever impossible."¹⁵

With perfect confidence, therefore, we may rest in the conclusion that in the Four Gospels we have a trustworthy account of the Doings and Teachings of Jesus and of the circumstances attending His Death on the Cross and His Resurrection from the Dead.

It seemed best to say this much. I fear, however, that I have, for the moment, thrown into the background what I desire to keep in the foreground, namely, *the fact that the Gospels are their own best evidence, that they shine in their*

¹⁵ "Thoughts on Religion," page 165.

own light, and need only to be given a chance to win their way.

Questions touching the authorship of Biblical books and the date of their composition are inevitable. The discussion of them is interesting and important. But it is quite easy to become so interested in details as to miss seeing the picture. It is easily possible to become so absorbed in the analysis of paints, and the study of the canvas, and the investigation of the different kinds of wood out of which frames are made, as entirely to overlook the beauty of the wonderful painting. It has been said of one of the most accurate scholars amongst us to-day that he spent so much of his time attending to little things that he finally lost his ability to see big things. And precisely this same thing has happened to many of our Biblical critics—they have spent so much time over documents and dates that they have missed the supreme thing—*the vision of Jesus Christ.*

Take the teachings of Jesus. One needs no more to argue for them than to argue for a sunrise. *They are a sunrise.* They flood the world with their light. They answer to man's spiritual needs as light answers to the eye, or bread to the hungry soul, or water to the weary and thirsty traveler. Only let a man live in that atmosphere, and he will stand ready to die to spread their truth over the world.

Take the picture of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. It is one picture—not four, and not two. Only purblind scholasticism sees in the Christ of Saint John a Christ other than the Jesus of the Synoptics. Let one study this picture of Jesus, and he finds himself crying out, “My Lord and my God.” And something else happens. Jesus is seen to be not dead, but alive forevermore. As one reads the story of Jesus, He draws near and lives again. The Spirit once more bears His glad witness, and the soul knows that it has found its Saviour. This is the perpetual miracle of the Gospels.

And take the story of the Death of Christ. In all literature there is nothing like it. Its appeal is far more powerful than the appeal which is made by any sad story of heroic martyrdom. A missionary in India tells that after a Hindu pundit from the hills had heard him narrate the story of the Cross, he cried: “Get out of India. Get away from here quick. Get away! We have no such story as that in all these lands with their many religions, and if you keep telling that, the people will all leave us to follow Jesus.”

3. *The remaining books of the New Testament give us the Apostolic interpretation of Christ and Christianity.*

Chronologically, the most important of these writings come before the Four Gospels. While

the memory of Jesus was fresh in the minds of His living disciples, and brief narratives, such as Luke refers to in his preface, were circulating from hand to hand, it seemed more important to write touching the significance of His Person and Work, and to make practical application of the doctrines of Christianity to the everyday needs of individual Christians and Churches.

Historically, we are on solid ground. Nothing can be more certain than that we are dealing with letters written by those to whom they are attributed. We have here letters born out of the personal experience of their writers. They show what Jesus was to them and what He had done for them. They are not dogmatic treatises. They are intensely personal. They glow with the warmth of the new life in Christ. They are valuable not as being statements of things to be believed but as living witnesses to what was actually experienced and known by the men who wrote them.

Since Saint Paul is the chiefest of the Apostolic writers and has influenced the thought of the Church more than any other, I shall confine myself to a brief discussion of his writings.

I freely admit that Saint Paul never divested himself entirely of "the heritage of the school" in which he was brought up. His conception of the universe was the current conception of his day. But no one thinks of going to Paul for a

scientific cosmogony. Man also and the history of man were regarded by Saint Paul from the standpoint of his nation and his time. It is quite clear also that at times his exegesis is that of the Rabbi. Note especially the manner in which he allegorizes the story of Hagar and Sarah. That when he wrote the Epistles to the Thesalonians he was under the influence of current apocalyptical conceptions is plain enough. And that he never entirely freed himself from them may also be admitted.

But when Saint Paul has so much to say about "law," and "righteousness" and "sin" and "justification," is he still in bondage to the Rabbinical system? Dr. Garvie's answer is sufficient:

"These terms do not belong to Paul's Rabbinical doctrine or Pharisaical experience; they belong to the permanent and universal manifestation of God's mind and will in His direction and control of His moral universe."

"But," it will be insisted, "when Saint Paul speaks so much of 'propitiation' and 'reconciliation,' is he not thinking in the categories of his age? Is he not using the language in which as a Jew he had been brought up?" Beyond a doubt he is. But if Christ came in "the fullness of the time"; if there is, as we have seen, a divine teleology in Old Testament history; if the history

and institutions of the Jews were in any sense providential; we should expect the thought and language of Paul's day to aid to an *understanding* of Christ—not to a *misunderstanding* of Him. If one believes that the advent of Christ was the one grand event toward which the past history of the Hebrews had been moving, one will look to the best Hebrew thought to interpret Him and to Hebrew institutions to foreshadow His coming.

Again, Saint Paul's Gospel was the "*received*" Gospel. Touching the vital things of the faith, the Apostles were at one.

Concerning some matters they did indeed differ. Echoes of the great controversy over the reception of the Gentiles into the Church and their relation to Jewish law sound through the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Saint Paul. But *no question is ever raised touching the significance of the Person of Christ, the meaning of His Death, and the fact of His Resurrection.* Concerning these fundamental things all are agreed. Paul writes to the Corinthians:

"Now I make known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the Word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all [as being first in importance]

that which I received [He claims no originality for the facts of his Gospel. He received them from those who were in Christ before him.], that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." ¹⁶

That Paul was able to write, "*Whether it be the other apostles or myself, so we preach and so ye believe,*" proves beyond doubt that the substance of the faith was just what he declares it to be.

And furthermore, when we come to a careful examination of other types of New Testament doctrine—the primitive Apostolic teaching, the theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the theology of Saint John—we find that there is deep and abiding harmony. There were no "warring schools" among the Apostles. The New Testament does not leave us in doubt concerning the things for which the disciples of Jesus stood ready to die.

And let it be noted that Saint Paul's theology was a theology that came out of his own Christian experience. This is what gives it abiding power. To the Galatians he writes: "For I make known to you brethren, as touching the Gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through

¹⁶ See 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11.

revelation of Jesus Christ." And he continues: "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood."¹⁷ That is to say, in a certain important sense, Saint Paul's Gospel was his *own*, so that he was able to speak of it as "my Gospel."

"Paul's theology had its roots in the fact of his conversion. Each of his ideas may be said to have been a fact of inward experience, a feeling, before it was formulated by the understanding. We must not be misled by its external dress, by the scholastic forms which molded the Apostle's doctrine; for at the bottom there was nothing at all abstract or formal about it. Deduction is not its favorite process. On the contrary, it always advances from the concrete to the abstract, and rises from experience to principles. Paul's is not a speculative theology, logically deducted from an abstract conception; it is unmistakably positive, having its starting point in the internal reality of faith. It would be impossible to find anything more vigorous and active in growth than Paul's doctrine. It is, when properly understood, simply the direct transcription of his experience, the pure outflow of his moral and religious life, which ascending

¹⁷ Galatians 1: 11-17.

from the depths of his soul into the sphere of the intellect, there finally expands into its theoretical form.”¹⁸

Only thus can any man get his Gospel. Not until, in his own personal experience, he has been able to interpret the facts of redemption, has he any right to speak of “my Gospel.” He may preach, but his voice is only an echo; his preaching is without authority. And this is emphatically true with respect to “The Missionary Evangel.” When the missionary faces the non-Christian public, he must be able to say with confidence, “*We are witnesses of these things.*”

III

This brings me to the last thing I wish at this time to say: The poorest place in the world for any man to be unsure of his faith is on the mission field. The situation would be wretched enough here in America, with our background of Christian history and having daily association with men of robust Christian faith, should one find himself with a *lost gospel*. But out on the mission field—the far-flung battle line—whether confronted with black and brutal paganism, or surrounded with a beautiful culture centuries old, or in conflict with a philosophy which commands the respect of the profoundest thinkers

¹⁸ Sabaiter, “The Apostle Paul,” pages 277, 278.

—for the missionary to find himself in doubt as to the Gospel and unsure as to his Evangel when commissioned specially to proclaim it—that were indeed a supreme tragedy.

Therefore, do I sound forth this call for a return to *reality*—a return to the faith of the New Testament, of the great Protestant Reformers, and of the Mighty Evangelical Revival. Therefore, do I plead that we come back to the Bible—the Bible as it is, the Bible as God gave it—not as mechanical unfaith would have it, not as dogmatic authority would insist that it must be—and certainly not as modern unbelief would present it to us, *mangled and torn and discredited*—but to the Holy Bible instinct with the very life of the Spirit of the Living God and born out of the experience of men who knew the certainty of the things they affirmed.

Let us study the Bible itself and find out for ourselves what the character of this book is which it has pleased God to give us. In the Bible God does speak to men. Here most unmistakably the attentive heart does hear the Divine voice. And there is *finality* in the Bible. There is but one Bible and there can never be another. The finality of the Bible is the finality of the Evangel—the finality of Jesus Christ. Because the entire Bible history moves toward him; because the whole Bible centers in him, and because it finds its fulfillment in Him, the

Bible comes with final authority to men. This is what gives the Bible its unique place in the literature of the world and its central place in the life of the Church. And this is why the Bible is so priceless a treasure to the individual Christian. The Bible makes Christ known. The Bible is the supreme book of our faith. The Bible answers the deepest questions of the human heart. The Bible offers the one solution to life's most perplexing problems. The Bible lights the path that leads beyond the grave. Thank God for the Bible! How poor this world would be without it!

"It is the golden casket
Where gems of truth are stored;
It is the heaven-drawn picture
Of Thee, the Living Word.

"It floateth like a banner
Before God's hosts unfurled,
It shineth like a beacon
Above the darkling world.

"It is the chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists, and rocks, and quicksands,
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee."

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL

LECTURE II
THE MESSAGE CONCERNING THE
HUMAN SOUL

**“And God created man in His own image, in the image of
God created He him.” (Genesis 1: 27.)**

LECTURE II

THE MESSAGE CONCERNING THE HUMAN SOUL

ONE of the commanding features of the Christian religion is its message concerning the worth of the human soul.

Not in any of the ethnic faiths is so great importance attached to the significance of human personality. Everywhere outside of Christendom one is impressed with the cheapness of human life and the waste of human values—whether it be in Africa, or India, or China, or Japan. And this is not simply because of the presence of teeming populations and the difficulty and uncertainty connected with getting the bare means of subsistence; but because all the various non-Christian religions are fatally defective just here, in a just appreciation of human personality and in an understanding of the value of the human soul.

The benighted African, of course, has no proper understanding of the place and dignity of man. Confucianism, where there is no outlook into eternity, where the skies shut down on the earth and the horizon never lifts, cannot possibly have it. Hinduism, with its hard-and-fast system of caste and with millions of outcastes less than

man, is fatally defective here. Mohammedism, with its doctrine of absolute predestination and its denial of human free agency, is totally lacking in any worthy doctrine of human personality. And just so with all religions except Christianity.

I

But even in Christian lands, and, at the present time more insistently than ever, the reality of the Spiritual is called in question and challenged with abundant show of scientific knowledge.

Our Western culture is interested primarily in *things* and not in *men*. Our civilization has become predominantly materialistic. We lead the world in machinery and all mechanical inventions. The factory and the skyscraper are symbolic of American life. The making of money is the chief ideal and supreme ambition of most men. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that there has been a diminishing stress laid on the things of the soul in the Home and School and also in the Church.

And besides this, there has come into vogue a pseudo-psychology which is wholly materialistic. Modern psychology has lost its soul. This was a natural development, a thing to be expected. For what marvelous results had been accomplished in the fields of physics and biology. In magnitude, in scientific certainty, and in

practical value for everyday life there had been nothing like it in the whole field of discovery and research. So sure did men become of the results of physical and biological study that they proceeded forthwith to apply the same methods of investigation to the things of mind as well as of matter.

The immediate danger the Christian religion confronts in our day is not in the results of the Higher Criticism, as far-fetched as some of these have been; nor in certain deductions from the evolutionary theory, as revolutionary as some of these are; but in *the total denial of all spiritual values as seen in the new behavioristic psychology*. As H. A. Youtz has pointed out:

"The behavioristic psychology which is the fashion of the hour aims to reduce psychology to a branch of biology or zoölogy. It employs the mechanistic method throughout, and the self is evicted with derision as a ghost and a superstition. Emphasis upon this denial is the explicit teaching of much modern psychology which is immersed in physiological and biological considerations."¹

It will be immediately evident that we touch here upon a matter that is of fundamental and far-reaching consequence.

In all religion two basal facts are taken for granted, the *Soul* and *God*. Divine Personality

¹ "The Supremacy of the Spiritual," page 170.

and Human Personality are bound up the one with the other. No religion that has a vague and indefinite conception of the personality of man can possibly have any clear and definite teaching concerning the Personality of God. And a psychology which denies the personality of man will inevitably go on to deny the Personality of God. The correctness of this conclusion has received fresh illustration in the positions taken in a recent volume on "The Idea of God" by Prof. C. A. Beckwith. While retaining the old and sacred language of religion, and making use of beautiful phrases made holy in the experience of the saints, he nevertheless, having begun with a denial of human personality, moves forward inevitably to a denial of Divine Personality.

Now the fact of personality is the most obvious fact in human experience. In nothing is personality more self-evident than in the fact and experience of *cause*. We, ourselves, are causes. We originate things. We bring into being results which without our voluntary action would have no existence in the world. This idea of cause lies at the very heart of our conception of personality. But here comes Professor Beckwith and says:

"What we term cause has no other signification than uniform and concomitant variation among phenomena. All the processes

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of the physical world are ruled by mechanical necessity. . . . Any other theory of cause introduces a perfectly superfluous and futile notion into our thought of reality."²

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that when Beckwith attempts to give us his idea of "The Living God," he does not hesitate to deny personality in God. I quote again: "In the nature of the case, human personality as we know it, however splendid its attainments, can never be anything else in the individual than transient and incomplete, in the race pressing on toward a receding goal. If this is to be the standard of personality, then God is both sub- and super-, perhaps extra-personal."³

One recalls in this connection that Prof. Borden P. Bowne somewhere says that *one of the unfortunate things about language is that a man can talk without saying anything*. For it is perfectly plain that no intelligible notion can be attached to such words as "sub-personal," "super-personal," and "extra-personal" when used with reference to God; and one can but feel profound pity for a student and scholar who has seen many things in chemistry and physics and biology—things that can only be seen and understood by *man himself*—and yet in some unac-

² "The Idea of God," page 119.

³ "*Ibid.*" page 292.

countable way has failed entirely to see and understand the significance of human personality, "of which it is not too much to say that it has been the motive force of human history and the main factor in what we call civilization."

We need, therefore, to come back to the Christian emphasis on the significance and worth of the soul of man, and to ask once more the question Jesus asked, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" For when personality goes, the Bible goes, Christ goes, the Gospel goes, *and God goes!* It is not to be wondered at that a recent philosophical writer raises the startling question, "*Must we part with God?*" Undoubtedly we must, if we accept the current and popular materialistic and mechanical interpretation of human personality.

But such interpretation fails utterly to explain anything. It breaks down at once in the presence of a great painting like "The Last Supper" or "The Transfiguration." It is completely dumb when one reads a poem such as Tennyson's "In Memoriam," or Browning's "Saul." It is simply stupid when we hear a Christian congregation sing,

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

When once materialism becomes the working rule of everyday life, as well as the theory of idle

philosophers and the obsession of tradesmen; then all beautiful things and all good things will cease to be, and brute force will become master everywhere; then shall we indeed "part with God," and all else that makes life worth living.

II

Christ has been called the discoverer of the value of the human soul.

Let me borrow an illustration. It is said that one of the diamond fields of South Africa was discovered in this way. A traveler one day entered the valley and drew near to a settler's door at which a boy was amusing himself by throwing stones. One of the stones fell at the stranger's feet, who picked it up and was about to return it, when something flashed from it which stopped his hand and made his heart to beat fast. It was a diamond. The child was playing with it as a common stone; the peasant's foot had spurned it; the cart wheel had crushed it; till the man who knew saw it and recognized its value.⁴ This story beautifully illustrates what Jesus did as he moved among men. Almost everywhere before Jesus came, ordinary men and women and little children were treated with contempt. Jesus constantly declared that every

⁴ The illustration is Stalker's, "Imago Christi," page 223.

human being is precious in the sight of our Father in Heaven.

One of the most significant things Jesus ever did, and one that has had far-reaching consequences in human society, was to take the little children up in his arms and bless them and to say, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*" We can hardly think of any one act, or any single saying, that did more to enhance our appreciation of the value of the human soul. Set over against this teaching of Jesus, the attitude toward childhood almost everywhere prevalent in the Greek-speaking world when Jesus came. By way of illustration, take a letter written by an Egyptian Greek and dated September or October in the year 1, A.D. I give it as translated by Prof. T. R. Glover. It was written by a young man to his wife. They lived somewhere up the country and he had gone to Alexandria. It seems that already they had one child and his wife was expecting a baby when he left. The letter follows:

"Hilarion to Alis—Greetings—Know that we are still even now in Alexandria. Do not fidget, if, at the general return, I stay in Alexandria. I pray and beseech you, take care of the little child, and as soon as we have our wages, I will send you up something. If you are delivered, if it was a male let it live;

if it was a female cast it out—How can I forget you? So don't fidget."

How shocking this is in the light of the teaching of Jesus! If the baby was a *boy*, it was to be kept safe; but if it was a *girl*, it must be *cast out* on the land or in the river, left to kite or crocodile. To-day this would be a crime punishable even with death. But when Jesus came, among the most cultured people in the world the practice of infanticide was common and was approved by such philosophers as Plato and Aristotle. How far removed from Christianity is this! Jesus declared that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of the Father." Which is to say that little children are dear to God and that His special Providence is over them. And again Jesus declared that if one should cause one of these little ones to stumble it had been "profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea."

Observe also how Jesus shows his estimate of the worth of the soul in *his attitude toward the sinful and the lost*. One of the most surprising things about Jesus is his unshakable faith in the possibilities that lie in fallen human beings. It is clear that he does not believe that any penitent soul is past redemption. The redeemability of sinful men is one of the fixed principles of Jesus' life and ministry. He re-

joices in the opportunity to talk to the Samaritan woman at the well. He receives the spontaneous outpourings of repentance and gratitude on the part of the sinful woman in the house of the Pharisee, and bids her depart in peace with sins forgiven. To the astonishment of the Pharisees, Jesus goes with the Publican, Zacchæus. They exclaim with amazement, "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner!" Jesus says by way of explanation, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

There is an illuminating and inspiring saying from the lips of the Master as given in the Gospel according to Luke: "But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, *never despairing*; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the most high; for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

"*Never despairing!*" That was the attitude of Jesus toward men. And he sends us forth into the world to take this same attitude toward all who wander and stumble and fall.

And what shall we say of the significance of the tremendous fact that *Christ died for sinners?*

Nothing so stirs the very depths of our being as the thought that Christ, the sinless and the holy, the eternal Son of the Father, went all the way to the cross, the agony, the darkness, and the bitter cry of desolation—for *my soul!*

I would make my own the language of an editorial in the *British Weekly* of December 14, 1911:

“When Christ came into the world he came to save immortals. When he was in the world his teaching, his pleading, his lamentations, his agony, his death, were all for immortals. He did not come to a race the members of which were to strive and struggle for threescore years and ten and then fall into a dreamless sleep. The cross was not set up for an object like that. He came to a race each one of whom had the great and terrible endowment of immortality. Not only was each capable of an immortal destiny, each was bound to it. All men bore the divine image; all men were to live forever. He came to save, to redeem from the curse, to give his life a ransom, to pray, to weep, to suffer, to die, that never-dying souls might not perish.”

The Life and Death of Jesus make two things perfectly plain, namely, that *man is sinful* and *man is immortal*. It was for man “dowered with the awful gift of immortality”—for man, *the sinful immortal* that Jesus died.

“What is the thing of greatest price,
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in Paradise,
That which in Christ is found,

"The soul of Man—Jehovah's breath,
That keeps two worlds at strife—
Hell moves from beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life.

"God, to reclaim it, did not spare
His well-beloved Son,
Jesus, to save it, deigned to bear
The sins of all in one."

III

It needs to be kept in mind that the soul, and the soul alone, has absolute and intrinsic value. Everything else whatsoever is of value only as it relates to the soul.

Man is at once the crown of creation and its interpreter. Creation had no meaning until man appeared. And nothing in the world has any real and abiding value except for man. The loftiest mountain, the fairest landscape, the loveliest flower—all the beauty and grandeur of earth and sea and sky were non-existent until man appeared, capable of appreciating beauty and being moved by grandeur.

For all intrinsic values are spiritual values. Beauty is not in physical objects; it is in the soul. "Not in nature but in man is all the beauty and the worth he sees." And the emotion of beauty is something more than a stirring of atoms somewhere in the brain. Beauty is a spiritual thing. The same is true of music. Music is

vastly more than a physical thrill in some nerve center; it is an emotion in the human soul. Civilization itself has to do primarily with the things of the spirit. Not in great cities with their towering buildings and humming factories, not in costly navies and vast armies does civilization consist. The foundations of civilization are in the soul of man.

And if our love of material things shall utterly swamp the spiritual, then civilization itself is doomed. It has been said that the undevout astronomer is mad. Surely the student of history who does not see that it is always the spiritual that gives strength and abiding worth to civilization, must himself be utterly mad. Take Phœnician and Roman civilization by way of illustration. The Phœnicians were the great merchandising people of antiquity. They were the factory builders, the bankers, the carriers, and the tradesmen of their day. They, therefore, became self-indulgent and luxurious. It will be remembered how, when the epoch-making conflict became inevitable between Carthage and Rome, Cato at the conclusion of every speech in the Roman Senate, would declare, "*Carthago delenda est*"—"Carthage must be destroyed." The destruction of Carthage was indeed inevitable; for such a civilization as that of Carthage could not possibly endure in conflict with the grave and vigorous and law-abiding Roman.

Moreover, when Rome itself fell, it was because spiritual decay had long before sapped the very foundations of her splendid civilization.

This is a lesson that we should learn from the tragic collapse of the German Empire. Germany was great until she lost her soul. The contribution of Germany to philosophy, to music and art, to religion, to the interpretation and propagation of evangelical Christianity, can never be forgotten. So long as the German mind was content to devote itself to spiritual things, Germany led the world. But when trade and commerce became primary interests with the government and the people, and a spiritual interpretation of the universe had been given up in the interests of crass materialism, then Germany was doomed. One recalls the finest of all the cartoons of the World War: The German Kaiser is standing by the side of King Albert of Belgium. In the background are the ruins of homes and churches. With contempt the Kaiser looks down upon the King and says, "And so you have lost all." But Albert replies, "*But not my soul!*" The soul was of far greater value than all that has been destroyed. And that steadfast soul of Belgium meant more in the long-run than all the material strength of mighty navies and brutal armies.

And let America beware! It has been said that the two outstanding features of the ancient

Pagan Civilization were "love of pleasure" and "love of power." If these two things characterize a pagan civilization, must it not be admitted that American civilization to-day is pagan? Surely the hour has come when someone should arise and cry, "*What shall it profit America if she shall gain the whole world and lose her own soul? And what shall a nation give in exchange for its soul?*"

It will not do for Christian people to make material progress and better physical conditions of living the chief end of religious organizations. There is nothing lasting about such things. Better schools, better churches, more satisfactory relations between capital and labor, better social conditions, larger opportunities for leisure and self-improvement—what are all these worth if there be no *abiding self* to improve—if the soul itself be only a form of thought—if human personality be only a dancing shadow cast by whirling atoms? In a few short years life will be gone, our culture pass away, our buildings fall into decay, our boasted civilization itself lie in ruins. If one does not hold to the Christian teaching concerning the value of the soul, there is nothing in life worth living for; zeal and zest will soon die out of human effort, and one would be compelled to agree with Huxley that it might be advantageous for a friendly comet to appear on the scene and carry the whole thing away to a

desirable consummation. For without faith in immortality, all hopeful outlook on the future becomes impossible; and as another has said, "the social task of humanity, with all its costs in blood and tears that righteousness may reign, is, from the standpoint of the everlasting ages, as unenduring as Michael Angelo's, when Pietro, the tyrant, commissioned him to scoop up snow in the Via Larga, and, with painstaking art, model a statue that before evening would melt in the Italian sun."

What gives inspiration to all Christian work, is the faith that no effort is ever lost, that no good thing ever dies, that the things of the spirit abide forever. This lies at the heart of Saint Paul's concluding exhortation in his great hymn of victory over death: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." It is only when we believe that the work we are doing is really worth while because it will abide forever, that we put forth our noblest efforts. And only as we have some great and ultimate object in view, does our toil become truly worth while. Some one has told a story of three laborers working at the same task. A stranger asked the first what he was doing. "I am cutting this stone," said the laborer. "And what are you doing?" he asked the second.

"I am working for \$7.50 a day," he replied. But when the stranger put the same question to the third stone-cutter, he gave this splendid answer, "I am building a cathedral." It is only when we feel that in doing the work of the Kingdom of God, no matter how lowly our task may be, we are truly building a cathedral where souls shall have fellowship with souls, and where worship shall forever ascend to God, that we find inspiration in our labor and a glorious task that calls out the best that lies in us.

IV

The worth of the soul is seen in its unlimited capacity for growth and development. As Robert Browning says, "God made man to grow, not stop."

Always we measure the intrinsic value of a thing by its possibilities in the way of development. In a dead stone there are no possibilities. No matter how cunningly the art of man may shape it, it remains forever nothing more than a dead stone. There are no possibilities of development in the trunk of a fallen tree. The life has gone out of it, and it matters not how much skill the wit of man may bestow upon it, it remains a dead thing and only a dead thing. But a young and vigorous sapling—what marvelous possibilities lie in this living thing! Or to go

back and take the acorn from whence the sapling came, what mysterious powers lie locked up in this little and seemingly insignificant thing that a baby can hold in its hand! And what sublime possibilities sleep in the soul of a strong and healthy child lying in its mother's arms! There are remarkable possibilities of development in the higher animals, as the dog, for centuries the friend and companion of man, and the horse, the servant of man and one of the agents in the building of civilization. But none of these possibilities can in any way enter into comparison with the possibilities that reside in the soul of man made in the image of God. In recent years we have heard much and read much about the likeness between man and certain of the lower animals. Limb for limb, bone for bone, organ for organ, brain lobe for brain lobe, there is indeed a surprising similarity between man and certain other animals. But the similarity is *all on the side of the body*. When it comes to the *mind* the dissimilarity is immeasurable. The difference is greater than the distance from the earth to the fixed stars. It would hardly be too much to say that it is simply infinite. Or to speak more accurately, it is a difference and the distance not of *degree* but of *kind*. Concerning this Prof. John Fiske speaks with scientific accuracy when he says:

GOD. What, therefore, ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.”¹

Now, precisely this must be the attitude of the Christian missionary as he brings the gospel to non-Christian peoples. He does not come to destroy; he comes to fulfill. He does not come to take away the things that other nations hold precious; he comes to add the fullness of grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. For there is truth in every religion. Every non-Christian religion lives not because of the error that is in it, but because of the truth that it contains. Unmixed error would immediately die. Christianity recognizes this, and must continue to recognize it. For God has not left himself without witness in any nation. “For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity.”²

In speaking of the Christian View of God, we must not leave out of sight our inheritance from the Old Testament. Everything that is true and eternal in the religion of the Hebrews, the Christian religion takes over and brings to perfection. With us the Old Testament is bound up in the same sacred volume with the New Testament. That there is in Old Testament history the record of a *gradual revelation*

¹ Acts 17: 22, 23. ² Romans 1: 20.

of the nature and character of God, everybody knows who has been at pains to study his Bible. That there is a genuine and true revelation concerning God in the writings of the Lawgivers, Wise Men, Prophets, and Poets of the Hebrews, every man knows whose heart is open to the things of the Spirit.

And here we come upon an outstanding difference between other religions and the religion of the Hebrews. In other religions, as among the Greeks for instance, we see men seeking God; in the religion of the Old Testament, we see God seeking men. The Greeks had their philosophers; the Hebrews had their prophets. To quote that most distinguished Old Testament scholar, A. B. Davidson: "The idea of man reaching to knowledge or fellowship with God through his own efforts is foreign to the Old Testament. God speaks, He appears: man listens and beholds. God brings himself near to men, He enters into covenant with them, He lays commands on them; they receive Him when He approaches, accept His will and obey His behests. Moses and the prophets are nowhere represented as thoughtful minds reflecting on the Unseen and ascending to elevated conceptions of Godhead; the Unseen manifests itself to them and they know it."³

The great and significant historic fact is that

³ Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. II., page 197.

God chose the Hebrews that he might manifest Himself to them; and through them reveal Himself to the whole world. The Old Testament first, and then the New Testament more fully, makes known and declares "the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob," who is also "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sums up the matter thus: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son."⁴ That is to say, the partial and progressive movement of Revelation seen in Old Testament history comes to its climax and completion in Jesus Christ. "*God hath spoken unto us in his Son.*"

What I am trying to make plain is that for the full Christian view of God we must go to Christ himself. In Christ we see God. Through Christ we see God.

But where must we go to see Christ? There are not wanting many who tell us to go only to the Four Gospels. And presently they tell us to go only to the Synoptics—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Forthwith many of them tell us to tear out of the Synoptics all that is "supernatural" and reduce Jesus to the stature of a man and nothing more than a man—and that

⁴ Hebrews 1: 1,

then and only then we shall see the Jesus of History. Such methods of criticism are unscientific and dogmatic in the extreme. Criticism of this kind ignores and denies and sets aside evident facts in the interest of a preconceived theory of things. But the newer criticism finds that Jesus cannot be reduced to the stature of a common man. The Christ of the Epistles is the Jesus of the Gospels. The Four Gospels would never have been written if the apostles and disciples had not first come to know Him as they do know him in the experience recorded in the Epistles. It was because the apostles and early disciples had come to see in Jesus the perfect revelation of the Father and the Divine Lord and Redeemer, that they thought it worth while to sit down and write the things they did write in the wonderful and winsome Gospel narratives. Answering, then, our question: Where must we go to see Christ? We reply: We must go to the entire New Testament—to the Acts, to the Epistles, to the Apocalypse, as well as to the wonderful story of His Life and Ministry recorded in the Four Gospels.

Nevertheless, while we study the Old Testament to see what God pleased to make known concerning Himself to His ancient people, and while we go to the writings of the apostles and disciples as they tell us out of the marvel of their experience how Christ came to mean so much to

them that they had to rethink the universe in terms of the Incarnation, we shall by a natural and inescapable impulse, find ourselves continually coming back to the wonderful story of "the days of His flesh." We shall walk with him in the fields of Galilee; we shall sit with him in the boat on the Lake; we shall climb with him the mountains and listen as he pours out his soul to the Father; we shall sit with Mary at Jesus' feet; we shall stand by and listen with tears in our eyes as he speaks words of forgiveness to the sinful woman in the house of the Pharisee; we shall hear him say to his critics, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"; we shall weep with him in the house of sorrow; we shall rejoice with him at the wedding feast; we shall burn with indignation when we hear him denounce the sins of the Pharisees; our hearts shall yearn toward him when he calls: "Come unto me and I will give you rest." We shall stand in utmost amazement when we see Him die on Calvary; we shall rejoice with joy that is unutterable when we hear the glad tidings: "He is not here. He is risen from the dead." We shall learn thus in our own experience what was meant when it was written: "*God hath spoken unto us in His Son.*"

For if men cannot see God in Jesus, then they can never see Him anywhere at all. I do not discount the great historic arguments for the

being of God—the *ontological*, the *cosmological*, and the *teleological*. They are all valuable and have their proper place. But when here comes Professor Machen, of Princeton Theological Seminary, and writes, "*Jesus was a theist*," and goes on to argue that without belief in deity growing out of some such intellectual processes or coming down by some "primitive revelation," Jesus had been unable to reveal God to man; then I rise up and protest in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord! For if a man cannot see God in Christ, then he cannot see him at all. And this I believe, and of this I am sure, that God has so made man that man can recognize and know God when God appears. God has appeared in Christ. If it be true—and true it is—that

"One accent of the Holy Ghost
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how certain is it that if one will but open his eyes and look, one cannot fail to see God in Christ.

The Christian View of God, then, is *the view that we have given in Christ*. The fact that needs to be emphasized always and everywhere is that our God is a Christlike God. Every other view of God, whether in some ethnic faith, in some earlier revelation in the Old Testament, or in some new or Mediæval theology, must be set aside as unworthy of God. Let it be said,

therefore, and insisted on at all hazards and with willingness to take all the consequences of the statement in the reshaping of our theology: *The Christian God is a Christlike God, and all views of God whatsoever from whatever source derived, that do not harmonize with the character of Jesus, must be cast aside as unworthy of the Christian religion.* The missionary who goes to foreign lands and the preacher who stays at home, both alike, must tell men with gladness that God is like Jesus in moral character. And what a glorious "gospel" this is!

I

Having all this in mind, let us consider certain things in connection with the Nature of God.

1. *In Christ the Personality of God comes to fullest manifestation.*

The fact of the Personality of God is, of course, everywhere present in the Old Testament. But its adequate and final expression and declaration is in Jesus. For it takes a person to reveal a person. In Nature evidence of the Divine Personality can be seen; through the voice of prophets we have reports of what they found in the recesses of their own souls and what they heard in sacred silences when alone with God. But in the Incarnation, God Himself stands before all eyes.

“And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

“Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.”

It is utterly vain to think that we can deny the Personality of God, and have anything left that will be worth anything to man in his struggle with sorrow and sin. To refer to Professor Beckwith's book, "The Idea of God," we find the scholarly author refusing to affirm Personality of God. He writes: "In this presentation we have left at one side the common conception of personality, as self-hood, as self-consciousness, self-control, and the power to know. Whether these are true of the Reality which is the indwelling and directing power in the universe, we may not be in position to say. It is not true in any sense which these words bear in our human experience and speech."⁵ But, in spite of what our author says, personality is the mightiest force in the universe—and the most self-evident. We simply cannot get rid of it; and when Professor Beckwith attempts to give us a description of what he still must call "The Living God," he tells us that "*God is Purposive Goodwill.*" And

⁵ "The Idea of God," page 301.

just as soon as those words are written, all the elements of personality come flocking in upon us. For if there be "good will" in God, there must be *will*; and if there be "will," there must be *intelligence*—for a *non-intelligent will* is a non-intelligible phrase; and if there be "*good* will," there must be *interest* and *emotion*. Moreover, the word "purpose" is meaningless unless there be essential and abiding self-hood continually and consistently directing things. It is immediately evident that all the elements of personality which Dr. Beckwith had driven out the backdoor of his philosophy, namely, "self-hood, self-consciousness, self-control, and the power to know," come flocking in at the front door and take their seat in the parlor.

Over against this blind psychology which ignores the evident and inevitable fact of human personality in an effort to interpret the powers of the soul in terms of physics and biology, and then goes on to drive God himself out of the universe, or to substitute a poor ghost of a once robust faith, *we set the greatest of all facts in human history, namely, the Fact of Christ*. In Christ we see in full bloom, in perfect fruit, all the budding powers of the soul of man. And in Christ we also see God manifest of the flesh. The Person of Christ is the adequate and only adequate revelation of the Personality of God.

2. *In Christ we have revealed the truth of the spirituality of God.*

This also is a truth found in the religion of the Old Testament. This is the principle underlying the Commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." God is the unpicturable God. Any image or likeness would misrepresent him. This nowhere finds more beautiful expression than in the 139th Psalm:

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.

"If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

"Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me."

This truth of the spirituality of God, Jesus recognizes and teaches, making it clearer and more certain than ever before. The classic passage is, of course, the story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. Not on Mount Gerizim in the Samaritan Temple, nor in Jerusalem in the Jewish Temple, must men go to find the Father. In every land, and in any temple, may

God be found—and *in no temple at all*. Said Jesus: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."⁶ I cannot do better than to quote at length the eloquent language of Renan:

"On that day when he pronounced these words, he was indeed the Son of God. He for the first time gave utterance to the idea upon which shall rest the edifice of the everlasting religion. He founded the pure worship, of no age, of no clime, which shall be that of all lofty souls to the end of time. Not only was his religion, that day, the benign religion of humanity, but it was the absolute religion; and if other planets have inhabitants endowed with reason and morality, their religion cannot be different from that which Jesus proclaimed at Jacob's well. Man has not been able to abide by this worship; we attain the ideal only for a moment. The words of Jesus were a gleam in thick night; it has taken eighteen hundred years for the eyes of humanity (what do I say! of an infinitely small portion of humanity) to abide it. But the gleam shall become the full day, and after passing through all

⁶ John 4: 23, 24.

the circles of error, humanity will return to these words, as to the immortal expression of its faith and its hopes."⁷

3. There is another truth touching the Personality and Spirituality of God that needs mention—*the truth of the Divine Immanence*.

In Jewish thought, the present and immanent God tended more and more to drop out of experience and thought. God had spoken through the prophets; their Sacred Scriptures were inspired and infallible; but they did not think that God could speak in the present. Long ago God had done something, but now they thought rather of the presence and intermediation of innumerable angels. Just as many of our modern physical scientists turn the operation of the world over to "Natural Law," and fall into the habit of thinking that "Natural Law" is an active agent and doer of things, so did the Jews of the time of Jesus turn the operation of things over to "angels," while God intended more and more to retire out of the world which he had made. The Jews of Jesus' day were what in the eighteenth century of our era were known as "deists." They believed in God—but he was an *absentee God*.

Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a God who is afar. He is a God who is anear. Hear what Jesus says: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and

⁷ "Life of Jesus," page 215.

sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The sun does not rise without God; the rain does not come to bless the earth except as God sends it. And how beautiful and moving are those words of Jesus touching the folly and futility of anxiety. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" And He goes on to remind us that God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers. How much more then, will God take care of his own children! The very hairs of our head are all numbered! Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father! How near does this bring God! And at another time Jesus gave utterance to these great and significant words: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." God has never been absent from his world, nor idle in it. All this is in perfect harmony with Saint Paul's great saying, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." God sustains all; all have their life in him; nothing exists apart from God and independent of Him. In the rising and setting of the sun—God is present. In the ripening of the harvest—God is there. In the blossoming of the flowers—God is seen. In the falling of the rain—God comes near. In the ebb and flow of the tides—God's presence and power are manifest. In the whispering of the breezes—God speaks to

men. Nature itself is but the garment with which God clothes himself, or rather, let us say, the robe of light in which he is invested so that our dull eyes may see him and know him to be near.

And what does the Incarnation of God in Christ say to all the world, but that God is in his world for evermore? The creation was not meant to conceal God, but to reveal him. The chasm Greek thought created between God and man has no real existence. God and man are not utterly separate and disparate. The two differ not in kind, but in degree. God and man do not differ as the stone differs from the tree, nor as the tree differs from man. God and man differ as the Father differs from his child—the Infinite and Eternal Father from the finite and earthly child. Here lies the ground and possibility of all religion. For if man and God differed totally the one from the other, then there could not possibly be fellowships the one with the other. And if they were utterly separate and disparate, God could not possibly incarnate himself in man. But God and man are so close akin that God could become man without ceasing to be God, and the humanity of Jesus could be the vehicle of Divinity without ceasing to be human. How close does this bring God to man!

And in Christ we see God at work in this world. We have, it is true, the teachings of Jesus that

God is here and now at work in the world. A philosophy that satisfies the mind and heart shows how God is immanent in all creation. But frail and purblind humanity needed a manifestation even to the senses, that God is at work in all Nature and in the affairs of men. And this is what the Incarnation of God in Jesus does for us—it demonstrates the fact of the Divine Immanence.

“O Love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!
On thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while thou art near.

“On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love divine, forever dear;
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, thou art near!”

II

In speaking of the Christian View Concerning God, we are not thinking chiefly of the metaphysical attributes of Divinity. We are concerned primarily with the *Moral Character of God*. Too often theologians have given their best thought to things purely metaphysical. Our great concern is with the moral and the practical. Things and thoughts bearing directly on daily life—these should call for our first and chiefest consideration. Some of our greatest books on

this subject take the wrong line of approach or fail in proper emphasis. James Orr has a book on "The Christian View of God and the World," but he is almost wholly philosophical and metaphysical. J. Iverach has a great book on "Is God Knowable?" But even he does not quite give us the knowledge of God that comes through Jesus Christ. That is to say, he fails to present adequately the Character of God as seen in Jesus. We greatly need to see God in Christ. Most of all do we need to know what the Character of God is.

To come, then, to our answer to this question:

1. *In the Christian View, God is a Holy God.*

This view is an inheritance from the Old Testament. Christianity takes it over and enlarges upon it. The God of the Old Testament is the Father of Jesus, and Him Jesus declared fully to man.

As revealing the holiness of God, there is a great classic passage in the Old Testament. I refer, of course, to the vision of Isaiah at the time of his call to the prophetic office. He had gone into the temple to worship when he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." He saw also the seraphim standing above him in reverence, in humility, and in obedience. And he heard them crying one to another and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth

GOD. What, therefore, ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.”¹

Now, precisely this must be the attitude of the Christian missionary as he brings the gospel to non-Christian peoples. He does not come to destroy; he comes to fulfill. He does not come to take away the things that other nations hold precious; he comes to add the fullness of grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. For there is truth in every religion. Every non-Christian religion lives not because of the error that is in it, but because of the truth that it contains. Unmixed error would immediately die. Christianity recognizes this, and must continue to recognize it. For God has not left himself without witness in any nation. “For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity.”²

In speaking of the Christian View of God, we must not leave out of sight our inheritance from the Old Testament. Everything that is true and eternal in the religion of the Hebrews, the Christian religion takes over and brings to perfection. With us the Old Testament is bound up in the same sacred volume with the New Testament. That there is in Old Testament history the record of a *gradual revelation*

¹ Acts 17: 22, 23. ² Romans 1: 20,

of the nature and character of God, everybody knows who has been at pains to study his Bible. That there is a genuine and true revelation concerning God in the writings of the Lawgivers, Wise Men, Prophets, and Poets of the Hebrews, every man knows whose heart is open to the things of the Spirit.

And here we come upon an outstanding difference between other religions and the religion of the Hebrews. In other religions, as among the Greeks for instance, we see men seeking God; in the religion of the Old Testament, we see God seeking men. The Greeks had their philosophers; the Hebrews had their prophets. To quote that most distinguished Old Testament scholar, A. B. Davidson: "The idea of man reaching to knowledge or fellowship with God through his own efforts is foreign to the Old Testament. God speaks, He appears: man listens and beholds. God brings himself near to men, He enters into covenant with them, He lays commands on them; they receive Him when He approaches, accept His will and obey His behests. Moses and the prophets are nowhere represented as thoughtful minds reflecting on the Unseen and ascending to elevated conceptions of Godhead; the Unseen manifests itself to them and they know it."³

The great and significant historic fact is that

³ Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. II., page 197,

God chose the Hebrews that he might manifest Himself to them; and through them reveal Himself to the whole world. The Old Testament first, and then the New Testament more fully, makes known and declares "the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob," who is also "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sums up the matter thus: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son."⁴ That is to say, the partial and progressive movement of Revelation seen in Old Testament history comes to its climax and completion in Jesus Christ. "*God hath spoken unto us in his Son.*"

What I am trying to make plain is that for the full Christian view of God we must go to Christ himself. In Christ we see God. Through Christ we see God.

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Nevertheless, while we study the Old Testament to see what God pleased to make known concerning Himself to His ancient people, and while we go to the writings of the apostles and disciples as they tell us out of the marvel of their experience how Christ came to mean so much to

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Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a God who is afar. He is a God who is anear. Hear what Jesus says: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and

⁷ "Life of Jesus," page 215.

sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The sun does not rise without God; the rain does not come to bless the earth except as God sends it. And how beautiful and moving are those words of Jesus touching the folly and futility of anxiety. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" And He goes on to remind us that God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers. How much more then, will God take care of his own children! The very hairs of our head are all numbered! Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father! How near does this bring God! And at another time Jesus gave utterance to these great and significant words: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." God has never been absent from his world, nor idle in it. All this is in perfect harmony with Saint Paul's great saying, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." God sustains all; all have their life in him; nothing exists apart from God and independent of Him. In the rising and setting of the sun—God is present. In the ripening of the harvest—God is there. In the blossoming of the flowers—God is seen. In the falling of the rain—God comes near. In the ebb and flow of the tides—God's presence and power are manifest. In the whispering of the breezes—God speaks to

men. Nature itself is but the garment with which God clothes himself, or rather, let us say, the robe of light in which he is invested so that our dull eyes may see him and know him to be near.

And what does the Incarnation of God in Christ say to all the world, but that God is in his world for evermore? The creation was not meant to conceal God, but to reveal him. The chasm Greek thought created between God and man has no real existence. God and man are not utterly separate and disparate. The two differ not in kind, but in degree. God and man do not differ as the stone differs from the tree, nor as the tree differs from man. God and man differ as the Father differs from his child—the Infinite and Eternal Father from the finite and earthly child. Here lies the ground and possibility of all religion. For if man and God differed totally the one from the other, then there could not possibly be fellowships the one with the other. And if they were utterly separate and disparate, God could not possibly incarnate himself in man. But God and man are so close akin that God could become man without ceasing to be God, and the humanity of Jesus could be the vehicle of Divinity without ceasing to be human. How close does this bring God to man!

And in Christ we see God at work in this world. We have, it is true, the teachings of Jesus that

God is here and now at work in the world. A philosophy that satisfies the mind and heart shows how God is immanent in all creation. But frail and purblind humanity needed a manifestation even to the senses, that God is at work in all Nature and in the affairs of men. And this is what the Incarnation of God in Jesus does for us—it demonstrates the fact of the Divine Immanence.

“O Love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!
On thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while thou art near.

“On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love divine, forever dear;
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, thou art near!”

II

In speaking of the Christian View Concerning God, we are not thinking chiefly of the metaphysical attributes of Divinity. We are concerned primarily with the *Moral Character of God*. Too often theologians have given their best thought to things purely metaphysical. Our great concern is with the moral and the practical. Things and thoughts bearing directly on daily life—these should call for our first and chiefest consideration. Some of our greatest books on

this subject take the wrong line of approach or fail in proper emphasis. James Orr has a book on "The Christian View of God and the World," but he is almost wholly philosophical and metaphysical. J. Iverach has a great book on "Is God Knowable?" But even he does not quite give us the knowledge of God that comes through Jesus Christ. That is to say, he fails to present adequately the Character of God as seen in Jesus. We greatly need to see God in Christ. Most of all do we need to know what the Character of God is.

To come, then, to our answer to this question:

1. *In the Christian View, God is a Holy God.*

This view is an inheritance from the Old Testament. Christianity takes it over and enlarges upon it. The God of the Old Testament is the Father of Jesus, and Him Jesus declared fully to man.

As revealing the holiness of God, there is a great classic passage in the Old Testament. I refer, of course, to the vision of Isaiah at the time of his call to the prophetic office. He had gone into the temple to worship when he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." He saw also the seraphim standing above him in reverence, in humility, and in obedience. And he heard them crying one to another and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth

is full of his glory." The great truth concerning the character of God that was there revealed was *the holiness of God*. In amazement and awe, the young prophet cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts."⁸ That vision of the awful holiness of God and the accompanying realization of the sinfulness of his people, gave character and direction to the entire prophetic ministry of Isaiah. It is interesting to note that on the Isle of Patmos, the Apostle John had precisely the same vision. To him a door was opened in heaven and he saw the Living Creatures round about the throne, and heard them ceaselessly crying, day and night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, he who was, and is, and is to come." *The God that the apostle saw is the same God that Isaiah saw*. The New Testament revelation is the fulfillment of the Old. Both in the Old Testament and in the New, the attribute of God which is forever celebrated in Heaven is this attribute of the Divine Holiness

Moreover, this attribute of holiness received such illumination and completion in Christ as is found nowhere else. Hear what is said in the First Epistle of John: "And this is the message

⁸ Isaiah 6: 1-5.

which we heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”⁹

This sentence, “God is light,” is full of meaning. Let us put ourselves in the position of John’s readers in the great and wicked heathen city of Ephesus, and we shall get the full significance of this passage. “His readers, most of them, had been reared in heathenism. They had been taught in their youth to worship Zeus and Hermes, Artemis of the Ephesians, Bacchus of the Philadelphians, Aphrodite of the Smyrneans, and we know not how many besides—gods stained, in the belief of their worshipers, with foul vices, gods so evil in some of their characteristics that Saint Paul justly said concerning them: ‘The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God.’”¹⁰

And now Saint John brushes aside this entire evil horde. Our God is utterly unlike any of them. They are darkness and not light. But our God is light and in him is no darkness at all. This, says he, is the essence of the message that came by Jesus Christ. And whatever else may

⁹ 1 John 1: 5-7.

¹⁰ Findlay, “Fellowship in the Life Eternal,” page 96.

be included in Saint John's meaning when he says, "God is light," this is manifestly there—"God is holy. God is righteousness itself. God cannot tolerate sin. Moral evil and God cannot exist together."

This is the message that came through Christ and which we announce to the world: "God loves the right; God battles on the side of the right; and God will ultimately crown the right. God hates the wrong; God battles against the wrong; and God will ultimately overturn the wrong."

Now when we turn to the Four Gospels and study the portrait of Jesus given there, we see revealed in his Teachings, in his Life, and in his Death, the awe-inspiring righteousness of God. It is not surprising to hear Harry Emerson Fosdick saying: "We often hear it said that it must have been delightful to have talked with Jesus. I am not sure. I love him. I adore him; but I stand tremendously in awe of him." This is an aspect of his character which has been too much overlooked by many. If one truly sees the Jesus of the Four Gospels, he will indeed "stand tremendously in awe of him." If one does not stand in awe of him, then one has not truly seen him. The actual Jesus of History is quite different from the Jesus of such writers as Renan and Harnack. In the presence of the real Jesus, Peter cries out, "Depart from me; for I

am a sinful man, O Lord," having precisely the same feelings that Isaiah had when he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips!" The Jesus who took the whip of small cords, and drove the traffickers out of the temple, overturning the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves—He was no chalk-and-water character. He revealed the moral indignation of a holy God! And the attitude of Jesus toward the hypocrisy and cruelty of the Pharisees must not be overlooked. Neither must it be toned down to suit our fancies. As a matter of fact, the man who is never angry is lacking in moral character. It is evidence of our weakness and sin that we do not more often burn with indignation. It is evidence of our lack of character that we smile and laugh when we should blush and weep and burn with shame. See the shame and humiliation of Jesus when brazen and hardened men brought to him the woman taken in adultery and thrust her out into the presence of the crowd. They looked on and knew no shame; he was so humiliated that he stooped down and wrote on the ground! Jesus was the holiest of all the holy; in his holiness stands revealed the very holiness of God.

In the lecture that follows we shall have something to say in reference to the holiness of God as revealed in the Cross of Christ. *There*, as nowhere else, is the holiness of God manifested

and vindicated. Around the cross of Christ we seem again to hear the living creatures crying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, he who was, and is, and is to come!"

It is evident, therefore, that the holiness of God is the highest attribute of God—the *fundamental attribute of Deity*. We are not prepared to say anything else about the Character of God till we first understand that God is essentially and forever the Holy God.

It has passed into a commonplace that the love of God is the fundamental attribute of God. But before we are ready to say that God is love, we must say that God is holy, else the love of God will have no proper meaning. Behind the love of God is the holiness of God; within the love of God, and giving moral content to the love of God, is the holiness of God; while beyond the love of God, determining that one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves, is the holiness of God.

This is the message that we have heard from Jesus, and which we go forth into distant lands to announce to non-Christian peoples. None of the heathen gods of antiquity were holy. And none of the gods of the ethnic faiths of the world to-day are holy gods. The very idea of holiness as essentially spiritual and ethical, is not there. It is only a formal and ceremonial thing; it does not reach to the soul of moral character. Our

Holy God goes forth to save men morally, and Christianity knows nothing of a salvation that does not deliver from moral evil and make people righteous.

Moreover, this insistence on the holiness of God and the ethical character of the Christian salvation was never more needed in Western lands than just now. Materialism on the one hand, and Pantheism or semi-Pantheism on the other, have largely broken down the sense of moral accountability in masses of men. The very idea of sin, as *against* God and *hateful* to God, has passed out of our popular theology; and to a large degree the sense of sin is missing in the experience of professedly religious people. As one consequence, we are witnessing such a reign of immorality as America has not known before. Our hope is in God, in the God of the Bible, in the God and Father of Jesus, in the Holy God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity and who in the person of Christ has entered into this world to save people from their sins.

2. *We are now prepared to say what all the time we have been getting ready to say. In the Christian View, God is a God of Love as well as of Holiness.*

Before we go further, let us distinguish between the love of *benevolence* and the love of *complacency*. God loves all men, but God is not pleased with all men. Just as a mother may still love her daughter and yet have a broken heart

because of that daughter's waywardness, even so God loves men while at the same time his heart is breaking over the sins and iniquities of men. God loves all men, but God is "angry with the wicked every day."

And let it once more be said that while God is *love*, God is *holy* love. When Jesus prayed, thus he addressed God, "Holy Father," "Righteous Father"; and when he taught us to pray he said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, *Hallowed be thy name.*" God is holy love; therefore do we rejoice in his love. Love, without the element of holiness, would be a weak sentiment or a passion powerless to help and bless; it might be the name for a base passion blasting and not blessing the soul.

Now this truth—that God is love—is by no means self-evident. Very lightly do the words come tripping to our lips, "God is love," "God is love." It is doubted if they mean anything worth while to most who use them thus lightly. For the truth that God is love, is not a first truth of religion. *It is the very last truth of religion*—the last to be received and *the hardest to be believed*—a truth that we take home to ourselves only after much groping, and disappointment, and many a heart-break, and after bitter tears—and then with peace and joy and rest and victory. It is a truth that comes adequately only in Jesus Christ.

Certainly we do not learn it from Nature. Too often Nature is "red in tooth and claw." Nor can we learn it from Providence. Nothing is harder to understand than the language Providence speaks. The wonderful story of God's selection and education of the Chosen People as recorded in the Old Testament does not fully satisfy our hearts. Many words spoken by the Prophets, as by the broken-hearted Hosea, bring marvelous comfort and encouragement. But the prophets speak no final word of love. The Psalmists sing many happy and triumphant songs. But also they sing songs of sadness and gloom. The Wise Men speak words that gladden our hearts, but also they raise many dark problems they themselves are not able to solve. No, not even in the sacred pages of our Old Testament Scriptures do we find a final and satisfactory revelation and demonstration of the love of God. In Old Testament times God spoke to the fathers "by divers portions and in divers manners," the former revelation being incomplete both in degree and in quality. But "at the end of these days," he hath spoken unto us "in His Son." In Christ, and in Christ alone, we find a complete and perfect revelation of the love of God. The great word that Jesus made use of, to tell us of the love of God, is the word "Father."

Jesus made known the Fatherhood of God. He did this in more than one way. He talked

continually about "the Father." As Dr. John Watson has said with true poetic beauty: "Jesus described the whole circle of religious thought, and stated it in terms of the Fatherhood. Prayer was to be to the Father: say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.' The principle of life was the Will of the Father: he only attained who had done the 'Will of our Father which is in heaven.' The type of character was the Father: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Providence is the mindful oversight of a Father: 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' Repentance was a return to the Father: 'I will arise and go to my Father.' One of the few rays Jesus cast on the future showed the Father's dwelling place: 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' The effect of such passages is cumulative and irresistible. They are better than the proof texts for a dogma; they are an atmosphere in which religion lives and moves and has its being. They are sunrise."¹¹

But we go deeper yet into the reality of things when we say that Christ not only *taught* the Fatherhood, *He revealed the Fatherhood*. What he said was wonderful and beautiful and compelling and satisfying. *But in living the Sonship, he revealed the Fatherhood*. And He did live the Sonship. In complete dependence, in submis-

¹¹ "The Mind of the Master," pages 259, 260.

sion, in perfect trust every day, in joyous acquiescence in the Divine will, in glad coöperation with the Divine will, in the unbroken fellowship of perfect love, in His most intimate communion with the Father—in these and in all other ways, Jesus revealed the Fatherhood by living the Sonship. “Not only is Christ’s word pledged to, but his whole life is staked on God’s perfect Fatherhood. If God is not the Father, he deceived himself as well as man.” In his experience of Sonship he is sure of the Father, and he invites all to come and share that experience with him: “No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”¹² The knowledge of the Father as given in the experience of Sonship, mediated through the Perfect Son, will give rest to all the weary and heavy laden of earth.

The apostles and disciples of our Lord were sure that he was able to do this. They believed without shadow of doubt that his Personality was sufficient for this task of making God known. They believed that in Christ God had entered into closest fellowship with the human race, so that *the work of Christ in history was the action of God in the affairs of the world*. Therefore did

¹² Matthew 11: 25–30.

they affirm that He was the Son of God. And with true spiritual insight and sure intellectual discernment the theologians of the early centuries contended for the full divinity of our Lord. Thus they saved Christianity to the world. It was not, as Thomas Carlyle at one time sneered, a trifling matter of a diphthong, that the sound thinkers of the fourth century contended for. It was the heart and core of the Christian religion. As David S. Cairns says: "These men in a hard and brutal world of blood and steel and gold, are putting Love on the throne. They are making an affirmation not only about Christ but about the Universe. They are telling us what they believe about the very nature of things, that in spite of all appearances this is a Christ world."¹³ We see now a deeper meaning in Saint John's great words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."¹⁴ The eternal reason, lying at the heart of the Universe, is none other than Christ. What was implicit, now becomes explicit. What was locked up among the secrets of God, now is made the revealed knowledge of all who will open their hearts to receive

¹³ "The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith," page 175.

¹⁴ See John 1: 1-14.

it. Henceforward, for all time, let it be known that God is love. God is seen to be Love in that God is known to be Christlike. Nothing whatsoever reassures our hearts as this does, that *Almighty God is absolutely Christlike*.

And when we follow Jesus all the way down to the last week of his holy life; when we go with him into the Garden of Gethsemane and see there his bitter grief and tears; when we go on with him to the Judgment Hall and hear the cruel accusations against earth's one perfect Man; when we follow Him on out along the *via dolorosa* and see him as they nail Him to the cross, a robber on one side and a robber on the other; then, indeed, do we see that God is Love. Love must always dare the worst and do the most. In the cross we see how God enters into the very struggle and battle with sorrow, sin, and death. We know now that our God is not a God that sits remote from men, and looks down upon them while they suffer here. Our God, in Christ, comes near to us. We feel his warm breath on our very cheek; we feel his strong arm put round about us to lift us up; we know his very heart to be breaking with the sense of our sin. "Surely he hath borne our grief and carried our sorrow." As the ancient psalmist said: "God is unto us a God of deliverances." And His cross is not the place of His defeat; it is the scene of his victory. There He entered into sharpest conflict with the

forces of the Unseen World. In his death on the cross he "blotted out the bond that was against us." He took it out of the way and nailed it to the cross. And "having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

"In perfect love he dies;
For me he dies, for me:
O all-atoning Sacrifice,
I cling by faith to thee."

Summing up, in few words, the most important aspects of the present discussion, here is our gospel in reference to the Being and Character of God. Our God is the Living God. The fact of personality lies at the center and core of our thought of God. All that we have in the conception of personality is in God, else the cosmic process at the end of infinite labor has brought forth a product vastly greater than itself and essentially different in kind. The suggestion that to ascribe personality to God is to set metes and bounds to Him and to limit the Infinite, is to use words without meaning. Lotze long ago spoke the final word in answer to that fallacy. In man personality never comes to perfection; it is an ideal which, like all that is ideal, belongs unconditionally only to the Infinite. "Perfect personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof; the finiteness

of the finite is not a producing condition of this personality, but a limit and a hindrance of its development." Man is only *becoming*; God always *is*. God is the one Being in the universe that has the right to say "*I am.*"

"We are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than we."

The Christian View of God presents Him to the world as essentially moral. Our God is a holy God. In answer to the question, *Is the Universe moral?* Christianity offers the character of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Righteousness is built into the very structure of things. The Ten Commandments are written in the laws of Nature. God loves the right, and hates the wrong. God fights on the side of the right, and battles against the wrong. God will ultimately crown the right, and completely overturn the wrong. The Cross where Jesus died is God's pledge of ultimate victory. Nay, Christ's Resurrection from the dead is the final revelation of the mighty power of God which has entered into conflict with the powers of darkness. To a world struggling with sorrow, burdened with sin, and doomed to death, the Risen Christ calls, "All Hail!"

And our God is a God of love. Jesus' great word for God was "Father." The apostle John says, "God is love." That is what the human

heart everywhere longs to hear. In answer to the question, *Is the Universe friendly?* Christianity says, "God is love. God is our Father in Heaven." It is freely confessed that we see but little and we understand but little here in this world wherein we stumble. There are many things in the presence of which we stand dumb. There are many things that send us to our chambers with shut doors where we cry out, "My God, my God, Why?" and we get no answer. Nevertheless, we do have an answer. Christ is that answer. Men talk much about the Divinity of Christ, and properly so. But we need to talk equally as much about the Christlikeness of God. A greater and better God than we have in Jesus, the human heart cannot yearn for. Seeing Christ we see God. "That this one Man whom humanity recognizes as the ideal moral loveliness should be at the very core and soul of this stupendous world of nature and history, the most real Being in the Universe, who can wish anything better than that?"

"Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—so wilt Thou!

So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—

And Thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with
death!

As Thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved

Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand
the most weak.

'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that
I seek

In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this
hand

Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the
Christ stand!"

LECTURE IV
THE GOSPEL OF THE CROSS

8

“The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me.” (Galatians 1: 20.)

LECTURE IV

THE GOSPEL OF THE CROSS

IN a volume of addresses recently issued from the Yale University Press, we find one on "The Fundamental Beliefs of Christianity." From this I copy a few sentences: "Progress, as we understand the term, meant nothing to Jesus. Progress to Him was catastrophic change, a wiping of the slate clean, and the beginning over again of a new order. . . . He was the herald and would be the witness of it, returning again in glory on the clouds of heaven. . . . He was disappointed; the new kingdom did not come; the evil custom of this world had its age-long way with Him. . . . He died a disillusioned and anguished man."

It so happened that just after reading that sentence, "*He died a disillusioned and anguished man*," there came to my desk *The Christian Century* with a beautiful editorial on "The Inevitable Cross," from which I make one or two brief quotations: "Jesus died because he wanted to live. One of the earliest Christian interpretations admits that such an idea is a stumblingblock to some people, and foolishness to more. Yet it was the idea of Jesus. Somewhere, at some time, he came to believe that only

through death could he make his message immortal. From that moment the cross was his goal. Literally, he embraced death. . . . He died deliberately. He refused any alternative road. He gathered up the fabric of his life—what he had taught, what he had done, what he had been—in one supreme act which, with true intuition, Christian study has in all subsequent ages somehow felt to have been a supreme disclosure.”¹

And then as I was running my eye over a line of new books just from the publisher, I picked up James Moffatt’s “Everyman’s Life of Jesus” and read the following: “Richard Jefferies, the naturalist, once dropped a superficial word in describing the scenery of Somersetshire. In the hamlets ‘along the foot of the hills’ he noted, ‘ancient stone crosses are often found. Sometimes in the village street, the slender column grey against the green trees, sometimes in churchyard, these crosses come on the mind like a sudden enigma. It requires an effort to grasp their meaning, so long have the ideas passed away which led to their erection. They almost startle modern thought. . . . Life is fresh and green; the stern thought in the stone becomes more cold and grim as the centuries pass away.’ Well, the sooner the modern mind is startled by the cross, the better. And so far from being an

¹ Christian Century, April 2, 1925,

enigma, cold and grim, the cross of Jesus, summing up the life he lived, is a clue to what otherwise would be an enigma; it is a warm and loving clue, for all its sternness, because it is only stern against what robs life of its true joy and impulse. The plain truth is that it is the cross which is fresh and green in the real life of man. After all, it is not because we are so far from him in time, it is often because we are so far from him in spirit and nothing loth to be so far away, so selfish, so dull, so engrossed in what is merely outward, so satisfied with the passing show of phenomena, it is for this reason that his figure now and then appears unreal and remote."

"Jesus died a disillusioned and anguished man." This jars upon souls, because it is both historically false and spiritually dull and blind. *"Jesus died because he wanted to live. . . . Literally he embraced death."* These words sound a note which awakens within us divine harmony. The spirit responds to them as the truth. "The plain truth is that it is the cross which is fresh and green in the real life of man." That speaks the truth as it is in Jesus and as it is in Christian experience. And even while we say this, there starts to singing within the simple Christian song:

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

“We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

“He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.”

I

The most characteristic thing about Christianity is the Cross of Jesus Christ. Christianity is often spoken of as “the Religion of the Incarnation.” But more specifically, Christianity is *the Religion of Redemption*. Nothing disturbed either by literalists on the one hand, or by rationalists on the other, we Evangelical Christians must keep ever in the forefront of all our thinking the Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to observe how through all the centuries Christians have held to the Cross. Very early Christianity felt the impact of Greek culture and the influence of Greek thought. The friends of Christianity themselves did their utmost to turn it into a philosophy congenial with the philosophies of the day. But there were innumerable simple-minded people who had found that Christ and his Cross had power to transform their characters and instincts, and

they clung to the Cross as the great rock foundation against which the flood beat in vain. Tertulian pointed out that men did not care to die for a compromise between the faith of the Church and the philosophies of the heathen world. I remember that Bishop Phillips Brooks says somewhere that *the easy faiths are always the weak faiths*. And it has always been true that when Christianity has yielded to the temptation to let itself down to the level of popular thought, it has soon lost its power to stir men deeply and to change the lives of sinners. This happened when the philosophy of Arius was everywhere popular and in harmony with the culture of the time. If it had not been for Athanasius and the rest whose definite and assured Christian experience would not permit them to give the gospel away—men who knew that their Saviour was the God who made the heavens and the earth—Christianity would have perished from the earth. And just so, in the Eighteenth Century, when Deism was everywhere the last word in Philosophy, Christianity, as something distinctive, as the power of God unto salvation, would have disappeared out of England, had not God raised up Wesley and other preachers who in their own experience had recovered the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

These things are said because at the present time there are many who seem to think that if

Christianity is to be saved, it must be adjusted in every particular to the last conclusions of modern science and made to speak in terms of present-day philosophy. Need I say that I have no sympathy at all with this view? Christianity is not something that is forever on trial at the bar of philosophy and which must always be trimming its sails to catch the winds of popular favor. As Professor Glover has said: "There is something awful, something wonderful, in the great spectacle of the Church in its solidarity standing one great witness to a faith, which the individual, with his short range, working on preconceptions imposed upon him by his day, would pronounce impossible and incredible. It is something to realize that in every age men have found it impossible and incredible, and have committed themselves to a faith that went beyond their understanding and been justified."

The reason for this is that man is more than mere "understanding." The *intellect* is not all there is to a man. Man has a *conscience* and a *heart* as well as a head. One of our greatest American philosophers is right when he declares that we need to be delivered from *the insolence and intolerance of the mere intellect*. Here is the fundamental vice of rationalism—it talks only in terms of the intellect. Man's total personality refuses to be classified under the one term, "*intellect*." The *heart* has its reasons as well as

the head. The *conscience* speaks with imperious voice.

And nothing in all human¹ history has ever spoken to the heart as does the cross of Christ. To-day, among the most cultured as well as among the most illiterate, the Cross of Jesus Christ makes a mighty and irresistible appeal to the heart of men. Nothing else has ever made such an appeal to the conscience. It, and it alone, "gives the guilty conscience peace and takes away the stain." These are facts that must be reckoned with in any discussion of the significance of the Cross of Christ. Concerning this very thing Saint Paul wrote long ago: "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the thing preached to save them that believe. Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."²

The Person of Christ and the Cross cannot be separated the one from the other. The principle of the Cross is in the Incarnation. Christ's whole ministry has the Cross as its directing principle. The law of self-sacrifice that was

¹ 1 Corinthians 1: 21-24.

there in his life all the time, comes to a burning point on Calvary. It stirs our hearts to read how when his disciples had progressed sufficiently in their spiritual education to come to the faith that He was the Christ, Jesus immediately began to teach them the kind of Christ He was, namely, the suffering and dying Christ, the Christ that was on his way to the Cross. After Cæsarea Philippi this was the burden of his instructions. And how loth they were to receive it and believe! When he "taught his disciples and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after three days he shall rise again," they were in great confusion of mind. They understood not what he said, "and were afraid to ask him"—fearing to find out something that they did not wish to know. And on the very eve of the Great Tragedy they were contending for first places in the Kingdom, so little did they understand the principle of the Cross.

Nothing except the Cross itself is more revealing than the scene in the upper chamber where Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Take Saint Mark's brief account:

"And as they were eating he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said: Take ye: this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had

given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Verily I say unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”³

Thus does he set his Death, his broken body and his shed blood, in the very center of the worship of his Church. So would he have us ever keep in mind the fact that he gave himself for our sins. R. H. Mackintosh tells us that he actually heard an able man conduct an entire communion service in which not the faintest allusion was made to Jesus' death. He says: “The feat might appear impossible; nevertheless he did it, and anything drearier I have never known. A pall of thick darkness came down upon us as he went on and on, omitting resolutely the one thing needful.”

We turn back now and read with deeper understanding those great words spoken to his disciples when they were thinking about places of influence and power: “*For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*”

There is yet another matter to be mentioned in connection with the teaching of the Four Gospels concerning the Cross of Christ. The

³ Mark 14: 22-25.

contention cannot be made out that there is sharp contrast between the Christ of the Epistles and the Jesus of the Gospels. The Epistles were written first, and written, as we have seen, out of the experience of men who found themselves under the necessity of rethinking the Universe in terms of the Incarnation and the Cross. Jesus had changed for them the whole Universe. The Epistles are the glowing testimony of glad and wondering souls to a mighty revolution in life and thought. Later the disciples wrote down their recollections of Jesus in the days of his flesh and the stories about him that had come from the apostles themselves. But even so, see how large a place the Cross had in their recollections of him! See how whole chapters are taken up in telling of his Sufferings and Death, while years are passed over with bare mention, or none at all. Everything about Jesus did indeed fill the minds of his disciples with wonder, but the Cross filled them with utmost amazement—and then with gratitude unspeakable. With them, the Cross changed everything—their attitude toward Jewish law, their relation to the Gentiles, their relation to God, their feeling in reference to sin and condemnation. And so Christianity has come singing down the ages. Stoicism could not sing. The non-Christian religions of the world to-day do not find it natural to sing songs of gladness. But Christianity,

when true to Christ, always goes singing on its way: "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his own blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."⁴

Everywhere the Cross is central in the New Testament. To quote Mackintosh again: "We do not need to say that the New Testament is all about the Atonement, for it is not. We do not even need to say that in the New Testament the Work of Christ is more important than his Person. But if we have read the Gospels and noted the extraordinary space given to the Passion; if we have read the Epistles, on the outlook for their main drift and interest, we are obliged to say that apostolic Christianity without Atonement is as inept as the sentence without a verb. The verb is *the word*, telling what is done; and the Cross of Jesus is the great universal word of God proclaiming what He does to reach and win the sinful. The solemn wonders of that Death are the apostles' unfading theme."⁵

It could be wished that we had time to pass under review all the great New Testament passages bearing on this mighty theme. I content myself with reference just now to two quotations—one from Saint Paul and one from Saint John:

⁴ Revelation 1: 5, 6.

⁵ *Constructive Quarterly*, December, 1913.

“But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him. And working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”⁶

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”⁷

“*Ransom*,” “*Reconciliation*,” “*Propitiation*”—these great words stand out boldly in the New Testament. We must reckon with these words. What shall we say about them?

First, we shall say that they are the language not of *technical theology* but of *living Christian*

⁶ 2 Corinthians 5: 18-21 and 6: 1.

⁷ 1 John 2: 1-3

experience. They were first chosen to describe what had actually taken place in the souls of those who used them. And also they are used to describe the objective fact, the mighty deed of the Cross, which brought about that experience. It is a fact that the apostles saw summed up in the Cross all that was in Christ. It is a fact that through Christ they were reconciled to God. It is a fact that what heathen sacrifices were supposed to do in giving peace, and all that Jewish sacrifice actually did in bringing worshippers to God—all this was accomplished through the Cross. And it is a further fact, that wherever Christianity went and made converts, heathen sacrifices ceased, and when Jews became Christians they found no longer any need of bloody sacrifices.

These are facts of *history* and *experience* that must be reckoned with in any explanation of the significance of the Death of Jesus. And now, as then and always, where sinners are truly converted to God, the Cross shines in its own light. It satisfies the conscience of the awakened penitent and wins the heart that is broken and contrite. As illustrating and enforcing what I have just said, let me give the language of another:

“In a conversation on this subject many years ago with the late Professor Pfleiderer,

of Berlin, he asked me to give him an actual instance. I mentioned that a few weeks before our talk a message came to the Manse begging me to come at once to a dying quarryman. The poor fellow was absolutely illiterate. He fastened his hungry eyes on me. What about God whom he must meet in a few hours? I spoke of God's love: in vain. I spoke of His Fatherhood: in vain. Love, Compassion, Mercy, Fatherhood, were too vague. It was like catching at a glittering vapor. Some instinct of Justice within him refused to be satisfied. So I said, 'God made us and loves us. But we have broken his law and are hopelessly in his debt. But He Himself has "paid our debts." Christ died for us. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Him.' I gave a rough illustration as a sort of window into a vicarious text. Could not the hungry eyes look through it and catch a glimpse of God Himself? They did see through it. 'Our debts are paid.' He could meet God in Christ his substitute.

"I put it to my friend: Was there not something honorable in that poor dying quarryman refusing the love till his conscience was satisfied? I can never forget Pfleiderer's emotion as he replied in effect:

'If a doctrine really meets a deep human need, it must be true.'"⁸

I give this story only for what it is worth. I myself do not use the word "substitute" in referring to the Death of Christ. Neither do I make use of such language as "Christ paid our debts on the Cross." But somehow this crude language did carry a message to a dying man; and somehow these words do convey to minds of a certain type some truth concerning Christ's Atoning Work that has always been infinitely precious to penitent sinners. *And I am not inclined to be a stickler for mere words when they seem to serve a useful purpose.* Indeed, when all is said, it remains true that at best words are only *symbols*—they are just outward signs of some invisible reality, and all words fail at some one point; they say too much, or they say too little, or they say something aside from what we are trying to say. Moreover, our best phrases, our most carefully framed methods of expression, are themselves but a kind of *ritual*—a form and method of conveying to the souls of men, saints and sinners alike, truths concerning the Christian religion that lie deeper down than the mere intellect, principles appealing to the conscience and the heart. *And always this symbolic and ritualistic use of religious and theological language should*

⁸ Hugh Falconer, in "The Unfinished Symphony," quoted by Dr. Mackintosh in *Constructive Quarterly*, December, 1913.

be kept in mind. For too often it has been supposed that the language of the New Testament was scientific and exact, whereas it is fluid and poetic; and so must all language be, that undertakes to speak of spiritual realities. Words are never big enough.

Let it be said at once, then, that we must, at all hazards, keep in the center of our preaching, in the very heart of our gospel, the doctrine of the Cross, although we find ourselves under the necessity of using the language of a crude and even an uncouth theology. And looked at from God's standpoint, it is probably all crude and uncouth enough anyhow! The *one* point I am now insisting on is this: "*If a doctrine really meets a deep human need, it must be true.*"

II

Having spoken in a general way, let us now try to sum up and set our thoughts in order more clearly and fully.

1. In His life and in His sacrificial Death, Christ enters into the closest and fullest sympathy with humanity. Or let me drop the abstract word "humanity" and say: Into what intimate sympathy with us sinning and suffering men, does Christ enter in dying for us! To borrow an illustration:

"In a large family of evildoers, where the

father and mother are drunkards, the sons jailbirds, and the daughters steeped in shame, there may be one—a daughter, pure, sensitive, living in the home of sin, like a lily among thorns. And she makes all the sin of the family her own. The others do not mind it; the shame of their sin is nothing to them; it is the talk of the town, but they do not care. Only in her heart their crimes and disgrace meet like a sheaf of spears, piercing and mangling. The one innocent member of the family bears the guilt of all the rest. Even their cruelty to herself she hides, as if all the shame of it were her own. Such a position did Christ hold in the human family. He entered it voluntarily, becoming bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; He identified Himself with it; He was the sensitive center of the whole. He gathered into His heart the shame and guilt of all the sin He saw. The perpetrators did not feel it, but He felt it. It crushed Him; it broke His heart; and He died under the weight of the sin of others, which He had made his own.”⁹

And, indeed, such sympathy belongs to Him by His very nature, in view of His relation to the human race. For in some real sense, deeper far than any verbal fictions of scholastic theologians, Christ is the Head and Representative

⁹ Stalker, “Imago Christi,” pages 194, 195.

of the Race. In Christ the Race was created. It is grounded and founded in Him. What I mean to say is this: The whole world is grounded in God. Nothing exists apart from God and independent of Him. Nothing existed before Him, and He has flung nothing into existence and left it there without His presence and sustaining power. Whatever is, is by virtue of the constant conscious putting forth of the Divine energy. This unitary conception of the Universe is the only one in which the mind can find rest.

Now, there seems to be implied in the teachings of the apostles that just as the universe lives and moves and has its being in God, so does humanity find the source of its being in Christ. As I have just suggested, this may be interpreted and understood in terms of philosophy. But the New Testament writers were not philosophers; they wrote out of their experience of Christ. Christ had come to mean so much to them that they were driven by the very necessities of thought and experience to go on and relate him to all life and to the whole universe. "All things were created by him, and for him, and in him all things consist." This became their conception of him. And then, as every student of the New Testament knows, they came to use one phrase, "*in Christ*," over and over again. We were "created in Christ unto good works"; God "chose us in Christ before the foun-

dation of the world"; we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings" in Christ. The regular name for a Christian was "a man *in Christ*"; and the same thought finds expression in those great words of the apostle: "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There is, indeed, the profoundest philosophy in the conception, but as I have said it is a philosophy that came out of Christian experience.

We now begin to see how close the relation is between Christ and the Christian—and between Christ and the human race. How deep, then, is His sympathy. "Now we are the body of Christ and members in particular." When there is pain in the eye, the whole body suffers; when there is pain in the foot, the entire body feels that pain. Even so, Christ suffers with humanity and for humanity. Our pain is his pain; his suffering becomes our suffering. I think our human experience as fathers will let us a little way into this mystery of vicarious suffering. We have found out from our own experience that this thing we call *personality* is not so separate and distinct from other personalities as we have sometimes supposed. No personality exists alone; no human personality was ever developed in isolation and solitude; only in fellowship with others and as we share their experiences and bear their burdens, do we

become ourselves. And how vital and intimate is the relation we sustain to our own children—a thing no one can understand except such as are themselves parents. We live in our children and they continue to live in us. And when by their own mischance, or through some mistake or sin of our own, misfortune comes to them, or desperate illness, or heartbreaking sorrow, or mental anguish—then that misfortune, that illness, that sorrow, that anguish we take home to ourselves and make our own. It walks with us as we go about our daily tasks; it is our constant companion even when in the presence of pleasant and joyous company; it lies down with us when we go to sleep and sometimes even wakes us up sobbing in the night. Yes, we who are parents know what vicarious suffering means, and through this knowledge of intimate human relationships we come to see something of the meaning of the sufferings of Christ—God's eternal heartache made manifest in time!

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine?"

2. We must go a step further or we shall not be satisfied. The question often arises: Is God always on the side of righteousness? Is God himself pledged to a moral victory?

We find an answer, and the one satisfactory answer, in the Cross of Jesus Christ. *The*

Death of Christ is the mightiest moral event in the history of the world. Nothing has ever steadied mortal men in their struggle against the forces of evil as has the Death of Christ; nothing has ever given such assurance of victory; for nothing in the history of the race has ever so spoken to the conscience, satisfying its demands and giving it peace. I am now simply stating a fact which has had its verification throughout all the Christian centuries and which is still borne witness to by the best men and women in the Christian Church of the Twentieth Century. Here I call attention to one of the most significant statements from the pen of Saint Paul:

“But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself

be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." ¹⁰

The plain and unmistakable meaning of this passage is that the Death of Christ as a moral event, when men recognize its value and put their faith in Jesus, has the same significance as if the full punishment of all sins had been inflicted on the human race. Sin could not forever go unpunished, God could not forever pass over the sins of men, and either the conscience of man be satisfied or the authority of God as a God of righteousness, be maintained in the spiritual world. Therefore, God set Christ forth publicly, *made a show of him*, "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness."

I shall immediately be told that we are now in a realm of ideas far removed from methods of modern thought; that I am attempting to carry a twentieth-century public back to the categories of the Jewish Church; that we must no longer think of sin as an offense against God but as hurtful to man; and that it is a waste of time to try to recover from Paul's technical terminology any truths and principles of real value in the experience of men to-day.

I reply that while it is true that Paul spoke the language of his time, that language had a meaning to him and to those who heard him preach; that while sin is hurtful to man, we need

¹⁰ Romans 3: 21-26.

now as never before to recover the conception of sin as an offense against the high and holy God; and that Paul's language gives expression to thoughts which came necessarily out of his own Christian experience and correspond to the deepest needs and demands of the human conscience in all ages and in all lands.

In the death of Jesus, we have such a revelation and demonstration of the awful sinfulness of sin and the eternal righteousness of God as is seen nowhere else.

(1) *Here we see the sinfulness of sin.* In the crucifixion of Christ, sin did its uttermost and its worst. He was the sinless and the holy, the purest and the tenderest of all the sons of men. There was nothing in him that was not lovely and lovable. But when the men of his time, even the trained and appointed religious teachers of his time, saw him, there was nothing in him that they should desire him. Therefore, they hated him. Therefore, they crucified him. There could not possibly be a fuller revelation of the length to which sin could go than we see there while He hangs on the cross and they pass by and wag the head and cry, "He trusted on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him; for he said, I am the Son of God." And the robbers also that were crucified with him, cast upon him the same reproach!

Nothing has ever broken the heart of sinners

as has the Cross of Christ. The great hymns of the Christian Church throughout the centuries bear witness to the power of the Cross. And hymns speak the language of the heart. Call to mind John Newton's hymn, which is genuinely autobiographical:

"I saw one hanging on the tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

"Sure never to my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

"My conscience felt, and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there."

(2) *And here, too, in the Cross of Christ, do we see demonstrated the eternal righteousness of God.* Here in the Cross we see what it cost God to forgive. God's interest in righteousness, His determination to save men morally at the highest cost, is seen in the death of Jesus. Nothing has ever stirred the human will to high and heroic endeavor as has the Cross of Christ. To quote the language of another, "In the Cross, we behold the supreme exemplification of the moral principle that forgiveness can only be imparted through agony. None can pardon

sin, ultimately, save he who expiates it, and through whose experience of pain the costly gift is mediated." ¹¹

The very first truth of Evangelical Christianity is that in Christ, and supremely in his Cross, God actually enters into the human struggle with sin and death, grapples with man's ancient enemy, bares his bosom to the foe, and wins the victory in the very hour of seeming defeat. Man's sin is not a matter of indifference to God; it is a thing that costs him infinite pain. God does not sit apart from the struggle. Here Unitarianism, which has commended itself to many sweet and beautiful souls, is worlds and worlds apart from Evangelical Christianity. In Unitarianism, man must struggle up to God. In Evangelical Christianity God comes all the way down to man—all the way to Gethsemane and the Cross. If this be true, and true it is, it is the most wonderful and glorious thing in the history of the Universe as known to us! To use the language of Professor Cairns:

"Such is the full Christian story of God. He who believes it, believes all that the humanitarian believes, but he believes more. He believes in a God who takes and keeps the most resolute and self-sacrificing initiative, is not repelled by the sin of man, but comes right

¹¹ Mackintosh. Bushnell develops this same thought in the second volume of his "Vicarious Sacrifice."

through its burning flame, and, scorched and yet Almighty, holds out His pierced hands of welcome and salvation, and says, 'Come unto Me.' There is surely something here to shake and move the very soul. If this is what has come to earth in Jesus Christ, then this is the greatest and best news of all. Better keep it even in an uncouth form, than lose it under the neatest and most easily believed formula of the study!"¹²

III

Let us now ask: *How does the Gospel of the Cross save men? In what way is it that Christ and Him crucified delivers men from sin and establishes them in righteousness?*

For it ought always to be kept in mind that the ultimate end and aim of the gospel is the salvation of men. And, furthermore, it should not be forgotten that Christianity knows nothing of any salvation that does not save morally. How, then, does the Cross of Christ effect the moral and spiritual salvation of men?

1. *To begin with, it opens up the way for sinful man to come to the holy God.*

We do not have in view any ritualistic or legal barriers that have to be gotten out of the way. And, once for all, we must get rid of the

¹² "The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith," pages 144, 145.

notion that "law" is something external to God that has to be dealt with before we can approach Him.

What I mean is that, in Christ, God draws near to men. In the Cross, God opens up his heart to sinners. Through Christ we have access to the Father. *Christ* is the propitiation for our sins. Jesus said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself." The Christ of Calvary does draw men. Conscience drives men away from God, or conscience suggests all sorts of things to be done to appease an angry God. Christ on the Cross satisfies the conscience and wins the heart. Thus does the repentant sinner cry out:

"Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
On thy behalf appears."

2. I have just said: "Christ on the Cross wins the heart." And I repeat and emphasize that now. *Christ, dying in agony, bearing our sins and sorrows on the Cross, makes such an appeal to the human heart as nothing else in the whole history of religion the world around.* The Christian religion is distinct and peculiar among all the religions of the world—it has *Christ, the Christ who died for men.*

Thus it comes about that Christianity is the Religion of a *Person*, and the motive-force of

Christianity is the love of Christ. The convictions of duty will carry us pretty far. Duty is indeed the "stern daughter of the voice of God." Devotion to principle has made heroes out of men. The appeal of the ideal has touched and stirred many noble souls to loftiest endeavor. But all these pale into insignificance as motives when compared with the love of Jesus. The best, the finest, the sweetest, the strongest, the noblest things in human history have come from this motive—*the love of Jesus*. This is how Christ saves—*He captures human hearts*.

In the Apostolic Age, we find the greatest of the followers of Jesus saying: "The love of Christ constraineth us." And again: "He loved me and gave Himself up for me"—feeling and knowing that Christ's love is something more than a vague and indefinite thing taking in the whole of humanity, but a warm and tender and personal thing *embracing Paul as an individual*—"He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*."

Coming down to post-apostolic time, there were "fiery trials" which the Christians had to endure. It was the love of Jesus that carried them through the flames. As one instance among a countless number, take the case of Polycarp. In a sudden burst of anger the mob cried out: "Away with the atheists! Where is Polycarp?" He had retired to his farm and they found him there. Nothing terrified, he had food

set before the men who came to capture him, while he prayed. In due course they brought him to the amphitheater, where the crowd had gathered and the uproar was furious. But above all the din was heard a voice crying: "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." Then the officers bade him blaspheme the Name of Christ. But he answered, "Curse Christ! Fourscore years and six have I served Him, and He never did me wrong: how then can I revile my King, my Saviour?" So they tied him to the stake and burned him. Such things won countless converts to Christianity. Such devotion had never been seen before, such conscious personal love for a Living Saviour! Justin writes about these things: "I delighted in Plato's teachings, and I heard Christians abused, but I saw they were fearless in the face of death and all the other things men counted fearful."

Through Christ a new devotion, a new joy, a new heroism had come into the world. The glowing words found in the First Epistle of Peter exactly describe their feelings. At the center of their faith was "Jesus Christ, whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."¹³

¹³ 1 Peter 1: 8.

Passing on down to the Middle Ages, about halfway between the days of Jesus and our own, we find Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, the greatest religious force in the Twelfth Century, giving expression to the same love of Jesus in the tenderest and dearest of all the Latin hymns of the Church:

"Jesu dulcis memmoria,
Dans vera cordis gaudia,
Sed super mel et omnia
Ejus dulcis praesentia.

"Nil canitur sauvius,
Nil auditur jucundius,
Nil cogitatur dulcius,
Quam Jesus Dei Filius.

"Jesu, spes poenitentibus,
Quam pius es petentibus,
Quam bonus te quaerentibus,
Sed quid invenientibus?

"Nec lingua valet dicere,
Nec littera exprimere,
Expertus potest credere
Quid sit Jesum diligere."

The translation of Edward Caswall is in use in the Church of the Twentieth Century, bearing witness to the abiding power of the love of Jesus in the hearts of believers in all ages:

"Jesus, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills the breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see,
And in thy presence rest.

"Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind!

"O Hope of every contrite heart,
O Joy of all the meek,
To those who ask, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!

"But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue, nor pen can show,
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but his lovers know."

3. Finally, the Cross saves because it becomes the inner principle of the daily life of the disciples of Jesus.

When at Cæsarea Philippi Jesus has been confessed as the Christ and when he had immediately begun to teach his disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem and be crucified, Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But Jesus turned to his disciples and rebuked Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan; you don't think like God, you think like men."¹⁴ God's thoughts are in terms of self-sacrifice; man's thoughts are in terms of self-indulgence and self-advancement. Then Jesus laid down the principle of the Cross as the rule of discipleship: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

¹⁴ The translation is Glover's.

For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it." Not only was there a cross for Jesus; there is also a cross for every man who follows him. The sacrifice of self in loving devotion to Jesus and in service of mankind, this is the law of Christian discipleship.

Once more, just on the eve of the Supreme Sacrifice, when certain Greeks came saying, "We would see Jesus," Jesus gave utterance to these significant words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." He had in view his own Death. If he had saved his life, he would have lost it. To live forever, it was necessary for him to die. In his sacrifice on the Cross, the grain of wheat fell into human hearts and sprang up in human lives like his own, like producing like. In this way He became the firstborn among many brethren. He was thus, to use Moffatt's translation, "the pioneer and perfection of faith." And as we come under the power of the Cross, we become more and more like Christ. To borrow a sentence from Horace Bushnell, "The grand first thing or chief concern for us is to be simply *Christed* all through, filled in every faculty and member with his Christly manifestation." This, it will be remembered, was Saint Paul's test of the genuineness

of our Christianity, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of sacrificial service.

The Gospel of the Cross is the victorious gospel. *Hoc signo vinces*. Nothing can resist the love that bleeds. Even brutal and ignorant savages have been strangely moved by love like this. Brébeuf was a Jesuit missionary to the Iroquois Indians in the seventeenth century. What he was not able to do in his life, he did in his death. They tied him to the stake and inflicted upon him every kind of horrible torture. But he bore it all without one sign of anger and without any word of pain. Then the admiration of the savages knew no bounds; and they came in crowds to drink his blood, thinking to imbibe with it something of his brave and heroic spirit. Except we eat the flesh of the Son of God and drink his blood, we shall have no part with him! Only as the principle of the cross is incarnated in our lives, do we have any right to call ourselves Christians!

A story is told of Martin, one of the saints of the early Christian centuries, that to him there once appeared a vision of the Lord in shining apparel, with a chariot of fire, and invited the saint to ride with him to the gates of Paradise. But Martin was wary; and looking at him attentively, he asked: "*Where are the marks of the nails?*" There were no marks of the nails, and

the vision disappeared in a cloud of evil smoke, for it had been a trick of the devil. This, too, is the question we should ask: "*Where are the marks of the nails?*" For the life that promises ease, is not the Christian life. The life of self-indulgence is not the Christian life. The life that dreams of places of personal preferment and of high honor, is not the Christian life. *If the nail-prints are not there, Christ is not there.*

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me."

LECTURE V
THE SANCTIFICATION OF ALL LIFE

"And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly."
(1 Thessalonians 5: 23.)

LECTURE V

THE SANCTIFICATION OF ALL LIFE

I PURPOSE in this concluding lecture to show how Christianity sanctifies all life.

This is what Christianity has in view all the time. Christian truth is given not chiefly to satisfy the intellect, but for practical purposes of everyday living. God reveals Himself to men and enters into fellowship with them not only that they may have communion with Him; but that through fellowship with the Father they may be made the true children of God, walking in the light and not in the darkness. Christ died for us not only to display the righteous judgment of God on sin; but to bring men into actual agreement with God in his judgment on sin, so that in no mere forensic sense, but in reality, they might share in the righteousness of God. In a word, what God is seeking to do through Christ is to make human life, in all its relations, holy and acceptable to God, the highest form of spiritual worship.

But before entering directly upon this discussion, I wish to point out that it is to the Evangelical Type of Christianity that we must chiefly look for the ethical salvation of the world; and to appeal to all Christians who hold fast to the

central truths of the Gospel, to set these truths in the very forefront of all their teaching, to have large charity toward all who differ from them in minor matters, and to come together in Christian unity for the salvation of America and of the whole world.

I

In the developing life of the Church different types of Christianity have appeared, each answering to some need of human nature, some particular aspect of the human soul. The most important of these types are the Practical, the Mystical, the Rationalistic, the Dogmatic, and the Evangelical.

The Practical type finds illustration in the Epistle of James, where stress is laid on deeds rather than creeds. But this emphasis becomes one-sided and misdirected when it is urged that "it makes no difference what a man believes, if only his life is right." It does matter, and matters immensely, what a man believes. Believing and living cannot be divorced the one from the other.

The Mystical type of Christianity has tended to run into mere emotionalism. There is, indeed, a mystical element in all religion. All religion roots back in experience and springs out of experience. Religion itself is neither creed, nor

conduct, nor ritual, but the communion of the soul with its God. It cannot be denied that the true saints have all been Mystics. Nevertheless the tendency of Mysticism has always been to forget the importance and ignore the value of God's historic revelation culminating in the Incarnation of Christ. Mysticism has not sufficiently appreciated the value of History. It has too often lost its head in the clouds.

If Mysticism loses its head, Rationalism more often loses its heart. Rationalism is always a peril to people of a certain type of mind. It goes on "the assumption that logic can be the measure of life, that rational coherence must be the test of possible existence, that the only way to know God is by the truth about Him the mind can comprehend, and not the life in Him the whole man may experience." Rationalism is one of the immediate dangers Christianity faces at the present time. The intellect has done so many wonderful things, that some have come to the conclusion that it can do all things, as if the mere intellect were all there is to a man. But things of the spirit lie deeper down than all our human logic. The reason alone can never come with a satisfactory solution to the profounder problems of life. Not by any means do I discount the intellect. The intellect comes from God and must be used as from Him. To discount the intellect is dishonoring both to man and God.

But man is far more than intellect alone. The facts of life are more imperious than the facts of logic.

At the other extreme, the pendulum swinging to total distrust of man's ability to find the truth, is seen the Dogmatic type of Christianity. It happens, as we have already seen, that at this very time it is the Dogmatic form of religion that is urging itself upon the world as the one and only type of true Christianity. Men, evidently lacking in first-hand experience of the truth and power of Christianity, fearing, it may be, that they themselves were about to see the ground cave in beneath their very feet, and unable to think their way clearly through the problems modern science had presented to an ancient orthodoxy—these men have fallen back on the discarded principle of external authority, the foundation principle of Roman Catholicism. They insist on a Bible for Christians in principle exactly like the Koran of the Mohammedans—that is to say, a Bible dictated by God and handed down to men who are so utterly different from Him that only in this mechanical way could He reveal his will. They hold that the ancient creeds set forth the Truth in final form, and deny that modern Christians have any right to think through the great facts of our holy religion and express them in language that can be understood by the people of the twentieth century. Now

dogmatic authority is a strait-jacket in which men who have experienced the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, positively refuse to permit themselves to be tied up. Spiritually minded men will heed Saint Paul's injunction: "For freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."¹

The Evangelical Type of Christianity is that type which throughout the centuries has gladly proclaimed the great facts of Redemption and has made all else secondary. It has sometimes gone to extremes; it has often carried along with it a load of baggage entirely unnecessary; but its central message has always consistently been "*Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" The great milestones of Evangelical Christianity may be indicated by mentioning four names—*Wesley, Luther, Augustine, Paul*. The great Reformers are called such because they recovered for the world the Evangelical interpretation of Christianity.

Lying central in Evangelical Christianity is the acceptance of the Holy Bible as revealing God's search for man rather than man's search after God; the Message concerning the Infinite Worth and Significance of the Soul of Man; the View of God as the Perfect Personality, awful in holiness, supreme in goodness, and re-

¹ Galatians 5: 1.

vealed fully in Christ; and the fact that Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man."

And we pause just here. *The Heart of the Gospel is the Atoning Death of Christ*. This must never be forgotten. For Principal Garvie speaks truly when he says: "*The Christian Church will lose its historic identity, will disown its spiritual heritage, will imperil its future in untried ways, when Jesus as Teacher and Example displaces Christ the Saviour through Sacrifice.*"²

The world needs something more than a *Teacher*. We need a *Redeemer* and *Lord*. Very wisely has it been said that "no appeal to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity, can seize and hold the conscience." Ethics alone has never been strong enough to save lost sinners. The profoundest need of human nature is the power to do the things we know we ought to do. Precisely here is the peculiar and distinctive thing about Christianity. It claims to have the secret of power; it offers power to all who are weary of sin and burdened with sorrow; and it presents an innumerable multitude of witnesses who testify that they have entered into the experience of that power. Said Saint Paul: "I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."³ Ethical admiration has

² "Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus," page 405.

³ Romans 1: 16.

lifted many noble souls to lofty moral and spiritual levels. But "an evangelical gratitude is a more potent motive than an ethical admiration."

II

What is needed at the present time is that all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity should come to an understanding touching the principles that are essential to Christianity. While some are crying out that we need division and separation in the Church of Christ, we insist that what we need is a new spirit of unity and coöperation. We need no new schism in the forces of the Church. We need a new feeling of oneness. The spirit of genuine unity can be found only in Jesus Christ.

Saint Paul sums up the essentials of Christian unity in these words: "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*"⁴

"*One Lord*"—that is to say, Christ must be our Lord and Master and we must know no other. What shall we say then to a man who acknowledges Christ as Lord, although he may not speak the language of our theology? We shall say that he meets the first condition named by the apostle. "*One faith*"—not one creed; for in the New Testament the word "faith" rarely, if ever, means "a body of truth to be accepted"—not

⁴ See Ephesians 4: 4-6,

"one creed," but one personal experience of Jesus Christ, the surrender of the soul to Him and personal trust in Him as Saviour and Lord. "*One baptism*"—certainly not a demand that all agree as to one form of initiation into the Church of Christ; for that were to go back to the formalism of the Pharisees. What the apostle means is that in baptism there must be one final separation from the world and one open declaration of allegiance to Him like the Roman soldier's *sacramentum*. "*One Lord*," whom we all adore; "*one faith*" in Him as personal Saviour, *one public profession* of faith—these are the things that lie at the center and heart of essential Christianity.

We insist on the facts and principles of the Evangel as contained in the New Testament. It is by no means necessary that all speak the same theology; it is necessary that all preach the same gospel. It is supremely important that all who follow Christ should learn to distinguish the things that are worth while from the things that are of minor importance. We need, as possibly never before in our day, to lay stress where stress should be laid. We need to discover, if perchance we have not yet found out, just what are the essential elements of a saving Gospel. It is doubted if anywhere one could find a more satisfactory statement than that made by John Wesley, the leader of the great

Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth century, in his tract on "The Character of a Methodist":

"The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or another, are all quite wide of the point. Whoever, therefore, imagines a Methodist is a man of such and such an opinion is grossly ignorant of the whole affair; he mistakes the truth totally. We believe, indeed, that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God'; and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and infidels. We believe the written word of God to be the only rule both of faith and practice and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Romish Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, the supreme God; and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think. So that, whatsoever they are, whether right or wrong, they are no distinguishing marks of a Methodist."

It will be understood, it is hoped, that this is quoted not by way of glorifying Methodism, nor for the purpose of claiming any monopoly of the true Catholic spirit of Evangelical Chris-

tianity for the people called Methodists. Alas! It is certain that many Methodists are "very far gone from original righteousness"—in this particular as well as in others! But Wesley's famous statement might well be made the standard of all Evangelical Christians at the present time. Wesley led in a great Revival at a time when skepticism and denial of the very essence of the gospel were prevalent and when a rigid orthodoxy had stiffened down into cold and lifeless formalism. Having in his own soul's experience put to the test and verified the vital things of faith, he was able to stand in the midst of a godless age and call sinners to repentance in such a way as to bring about one of the greatest Revivals of Evangelical Religion in the history of the Church. These things are mentioned only by way of insistence on the things that lie at the heart of a saving gospel.

Little things fall away from us, when big things are put in their rightful place. My ardent desire is that I may draw the thought of men and women away from things that do not matter, from things that dissipate our spiritual energies, and from things that divide the forces of the Kingdom, to the things that have made Evangelical Christianity and that are forever necessary to a gospel ample to save the world.

III

The Religion of the New Testament is a practicable religion. It is a religion that has to do with life.

The fact of the business is that the only salvation the Christian religion cares anything about is an ethical salvation. It is a salvation that operates by spiritual means and to spiritual ends. It is sublimely moral in its nature, and its ultimate aim is to make people good morally. According to the Christian Gospel if a man is not a good man—a good husband, a good father, a good neighbor, a good citizen—he is not a true Christian. Christianity sanctifies all human relationships. This is what Christianity has in view all the time, that life in its totality shall be made holy. W. L. Watkinson has a sermon entitled “Sanctification: Entire and Universal,” in which is this fine passage:

“We must make common things grand with the touch of righteousness; we must give all commonplace life the beauty of holiness. ‘The whole limit shall be most holy.’ This shall be the law of our houses, the law of parliaments, the law of the municipality, the law of the exchange, the law of the shop, the office, the street. The glorious day comes when men will do bitter penance for having given their brother an angry look;

when they will condemn their soul to the treadmill for having put the big strawberry on the top; when they will rather don the cast-off rags of the leper than wear purple stained with a workman's blood or a seamstress' tear; when the ledger, the inkpot, the plow, the loom, all the vessels of industry, all the tools of toil, all the instruments of science, shall be as vessels of the altar."

This is exactly what Christians are laboring for, whether at home or abroad—to *build on earth the kingdom of the Living God*. This is the grand objective of all missionary, of all educational, of all evangelistic effort—to bring down from heaven into human society the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. This is the glad Evangel that we carry to all the world—that *all human life in all its relations may be sanctified and laid as an offering on the altar of the Lord*.

In order the better to appreciate the spirit and power of Christianity, let us go back and look at the Church at work in the early centuries. We note how in various ways Christianity brought about the sanctification of all life.

1. *Christianity at once displayed the power to save individuals from sin, even under the most adverse conditions.*

It did not do this by renouncing the world. It did not send the followers of Christ out into the wilderness remote from men to seek in soli-

tude what they were not able to find in the crowd. What it did was to give to men the power to keep in the midst of the crowd the peace and calm they had found in the silence of their own souls. Paul explained the secret when he said: "Our citizenship is in heaven." They were able, while yet in this evil world, to clothe themselves with a celestial atmosphere and, to a large extent, to create the environment in which they lived. One of these early Christians, Cyprian, in the third century wrote a letter to his friend Donatus, the substance of which is as follows:

"Donatus, this is a cheerful world indeed as I see it from my fair garden, under the shadow of the vines. But if I could ascend some high mountain and look out over the wide lands, you know very well what I should see: brigands on the highways, pirates on the seas, armies fighting, cities burning, in the amphitheaters men murdering to please applauding crowds, selfishness and cruelty and despair under all roofs. It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a company of quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not: they are masters of their souls. They

have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians—and I am one of them.”

Christ, now, as in the early days, still gives this power to men. This is the Evangel we bear to the whole world: *Christ is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God through Him.* His name is Jesus and He saves His people from their sins.

2. *Christianity proclaimed the sanctification of the body.*

In their attitude toward the body, ancients and moderns alike have gone to two extremes—to the extreme of *asceticism* and to the extreme of *sensuality*. The ascetic views the body as the enemy of the soul. Therefore, he tortures his body for the good of his soul. We see this in the Orient in various and shocking ways. In the Middle Ages the “saints” separated themselves from their fellow men and inflicted upon themselves all kinds of distress and torture. At the other extreme, men have yielded to the appeal of the senses and have plunged headlong into self-indulgence and sensuality. Sensuality was, as everybody knows, one of the characteristics of Roman life when Christianity first went forth to conquer the world. The great city of Corinth had become such a center of abysmal corruption that the very name of the city had been turned into a Greek verb, *Corinthiazesthai*,

which means "to play the prostitute." The very temples of the gods were set apart to shameful lusts. It is generally agreed that the apostle's sketch of moral conditions in the Roman Empire as outlined in the first two chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, exaggerates in no particular. I once made a study of the First Epistle to the Corinthians while on the Mission Field in other lands, and was startled to see how modern that Epistle is in its description of actual conditions in countries that have not come under the power of the Gospel. As Dean Farrar says: "Gluttony, caprice, extravagance, ostentation, impurity, rioted in the heart of a society which knew no other means to break the monotony of its weariness, or alleviate the anguish of its despair."

"On that hard Pagan world disgust,
And secret loathing fell:
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.
In his cool hall with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad in furious guise
Along the Appian Way;
He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crowned his hair with flowers—
No easier, nor no quicker past
The impracticable hours."

Into exactly this kind of world came Christianity and proclaimed the sanctification of the body. The *body* is the Christian's friend, and

not his *enemy*. It is not to be tortured, on the one hand; neither is it to be permitted to become one's master, on the other hand. And it is not to be despised. Christ is the Redeemer of the body as well as of the soul. Writes the apostle to the Romans: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." And to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." And to the Christians in Asia he writes: "Christ is the Saviour of the body."

The Christian ideal is attained when we are able to make Robert Browning's language our own:

"Let us not always say,
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps
soul.' "

The Christian gospel of the sanctification of the body is surely the gospel that needs to be proclaimed now by all who are messengers of the cross. For everywhere there seems to have come a resurgence of the appetites of the body. Pagan sensuality openly flaunts itself not only in daily practice but as a philosophy of life. Liberty, self-expression, self-indulgence are cried

aloud as offering the secret of happiness and as presenting the great object of living. There was never a day when men and women were more conscious of body and less aware of soul. Everywhere people are quenching soul in sensuality. But the purpose and aim of the Christian religion is that the God of peace may himself "sanctify you wholly; and your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christianity sanctifies the body.

3. Christianity accomplished the Redemption of womanhood.

The crowning glory of Christianity is seen in its womanhood. In nothing is the redemptive power of the gospel so displayed as in the beauty and purity and strength of Christian women. Contrast the women of the early Church with the women of Rome. Or compare the Christian women of America with the best women of the non-Christian faiths, and you will see what a glorious Evangel Jesus brings to women.

One of the early Christians struck out a great phrase, and called attention to a terrible fact, when he spoke of woman as "the victim of the common lust!" This is what she was in Rome. This is what she is now in pagan lands. And this is what she is here in our own country when Christian morals are not practiced. Always it

is the woman that is the worst "victim." And when woman is degraded, man is ruined. It has often been observed that "the radical disease, of which, more than anything else, ancient civilization perished was an imperfect ideal of woman." Jesus brought a new and transforming ideal into the world. He reflected new glory upon all mothers by being Himself born of Mary. How open and generous was his attitude toward women—toward all women. One is surprised to find what faith he had even in fallen woman. One such wept her tears of penitence at his feet—and he repulsed her not, but forgave her sins and sent her out into the peace of God with power to sin no more. Another they brought—yes, dragged—into his presence with all her guilt and shame fresh upon her—and he rebuked her accusers till they sneaked away, while the woman was left alone with Jesus, and he sent her away to sin no more. Another, and a Samaritan woman besides, he tarried at the well to talk with, and opened to her thirsting soul a fountain of living water in the drinking of which she found eternal satisfaction. "Victims of the common lust" they were—and now redeemed by Christ!

What beautiful women they were—those friends of Jesus during the days of his Ministry. There were women like Mary and Martha; and there were Mary Magdalene and other women who ministered unto him. No Hebrew

prophet has taken this attitude toward women, nor had any other Jewish teacher. Jesus is Woman's Saviour. And he lent his secret to his disciples. In Christ there was "neither male nor female." Paul numbered among his friends many noble women, such as Phœbe the sister, "who is a deaconess of the church that is in Cenchreæ." Of her he writes: "She hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self." Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, moved freely among the churches in the Apostolic Age, bearing the Christian Evangel in their daily lives as well as in their message of eternal salvation. In the New Testament woman takes her place where Jesus intended she should be.

In the centuries following there were never lacking saintly women the purity of whose lives shined like a bright candle in the midst of great darkness. Christianity had set chastity at the very center of Christian virtues. Passionate purity was the protest of the saint against the sensuality of the time and the almost universal degradation of women. It would be easy to mention many women whose names adorn those early records. Let mention be made only of one. Lecky remarks that it would be difficult in all history to find a more touching picture of natural purity than is seen in one simple incident connected with the martyrdom of the noble young woman, Perpetua. When upon the sand of the

arena she fell half dead from the horns of the wild bull that had tossed her, "it was observed that even in that awful moment her virgin modesty was supreme, and her first instinctive movement was to draw together her dress which had been torn in the assault." The impression this made on the assembled multitude is seen in the fact that it was never forgotten! No wonder that the blood of such martyrs became the seed of the Church!

4. *Christianity sanctifies life by the place it gives childhood in the family and in the Church.*

Possibly no one thing has influenced human society more profoundly than that simple story of Jesus with a baby in his arms. "And they were bringing unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God."⁵ Thus did Jesus set the child in the midst.

It should not be forgotten that in the religion of the Hebrews the place and importance of childhood were duly recognized. By the rite of circumcision the child entered into participation in the blessings of the covenant made with Abraham. The ancient Hebrew father was commanded in the Law diligently to teach his chil-

⁵ Luke 18: 15, 16.

dren as he talked with them in the house and as he walked with them by the way, when he lay down at night and when he arose in the morning. With the Hebrews it was recognized that "children are a heritage from the Lord." Christianity, therefore, serves itself heir to one of the finest things in the religion of the Old Testament when it sanctifies childhood.

This has been the significance of baptism in the Church from the earliest times. It would have been considered nothing short of an open breach with all social and religious customs if the Christians had not baptized their children when they themselves came into the Christian community. They had been redeemed by Christ; He himself had said, "To such belongeth the kingdom of God"; and all Jewish children had come under the blessings of the ancient covenant. Children, therefore, were embraced within the fold of the New Covenant.

We seem slow to learn the importance of Christian teaching concerning childhood. Our children are not the devil's children; they are God's children. This, it should be remembered, is the significance of our act of dedication when we take them up in our arms and say, "Suffer the little children to come, and forbid them not."

Furthermore, the race will be saved only as childhood is brought under the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And whosoever sins

against childhood, as Jesus said, "It is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea."

5. *Once more, Christianity sanctifies all life by its recognition of the essential dignity of human nature.*

"The Fatherhood of God" and "the brotherhood of man" are phrases which come very lightly to our lips. We use them so often that it is feared that we fail duly to appreciate their far-reaching significance. It is certain that no more revolutionary ideas were ever turned loose in the world than the ideas presented in these phrases. It would seem hardly necessary to say again what has been said so often that we have here one of the cardinal principles, one of the fundamental truths of the Christianity of Christ. But there have arisen quite a number who call themselves followers of Christ and profess to be very zealous for the faith as it has been delivered unto the saints, who constantly affirm and loudly declare that Christ did not teach any such doctrine as the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Machen, for instance, characterized these truths as doctrines of "liberalism," and says that "they are contrary to the doctrines of the Christian religion."⁶

⁶ "Christianity and Liberalism," page 18. See also page 157 *et seq.*

Our reply is Only read the Sermon on the Mount and the rest of the New Testament, and see for yourself. It is a curious notion that we glorify God by denouncing human nature. How careful Jesus is to warn us not only against hatred of our fellow men, but also against contempt for man: "Every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."⁷ *Contempt* as well as *hatred* contradicts the truth of the Divine Fatherhood and denies the fact of human brotherhood.

It is simply delightful to open the New Testament and see the leaven of the Evangel at work transforming human society as well as changing individual lives. One of the most beautiful letters ever written by a friend to a friend is the Epistle of Paul to Philemon. Philemon was one of Paul's well-to-do Christian friends; and his slave, Onesimus, had robbed him and run away to Rome. By some chance he had come under the influence of the apostle there and had been converted. Paul put into his hand this little letter and sent him back to his master. After the most courteous Christian salutations, the letter continues:

"Wherefore, though I have all boldness

⁷ Matthew 5: 22.

in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who was once unprofitable unto thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart."

It will be observed that the apostle does not request Philemon to set Onesimus free. And it must be noted also that nowhere in the New Testament is it specifically stated that the institution of human slavery is sinful and should be abolished. But when Jesus taught the brotherhood of man, he turned loose a principle which was sure in the long run to set every slave free; and when Paul wrote this letter to his friend, he rang a bell which has reverberated throughout the whole world. The doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood and of human brotherhood, in the very nature of the case, denies the right of any man to own another or to treat him as a *thing* and not as a *person*. Thus it came about, in time, that slavery disappeared from all Christian lands.

But we go too fast! Has slavery indeed disappeared? Do not men still *own* men and treat them as *things* and not as *human beings*? As a social institution human slavery has gone. As

an economic institution it is still strongly entrenched—strongly entrenched, I say—and, what is more, backed in high places by men who boast their orthodoxy and their steadfast loyalty to the customs of the fathers. It is by no accident that a certain type of theology allies itself with industrial slavery, and denounces the prophets of New Testament Christianity as destroyers of the faith. But once more the voice of the liberator is heard crying to the oppressor: "Let my people go!" Slavery and Christianity cannot forever exist side by side. Christianity sanctifies all life. Industrial slavery profanes it. Little children toiling in factories, young girls working for wages that make sin inevitable, women making shirts that might very properly be starched with human blood, men toiling in mines till the light in their eyes goes out, workmen dehumanized till there is little difference between them and the machinery that all the time hums in their ears, babies born in haunts of vice and crime, young people growing up under conditions that dwarf and stunt the soul—what is all this but heathenism and a denial of the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

"O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again;

"Till sons of men shall learn thy love,
And follow where Thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from Thy heaven above,
Shall come the City of our God."

The sanctification of all life—this is the program of Christianity for the world. In non-Christian lands we had made a good beginning. The daily life of Christian missionaries had illustrated the gospel they preached. For the life itself is a gospel. Professor Glover very beautifully says that "the Gospels are not *four*, but 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.'" By the gospel of Christ-like lives have missionaries in all centuries preached in language that men could understand. Love, Service, and Self-Sacrifice win their way to all hearts. In other countries the Christian Home had stood as a demonstration plant to show what Christ can do where husband and wife live together as children of God. Hospitals had brought their healing ministries to thousands of miserable and helpless sufferers. Schools had created new opportunities for those who had not had a man's chance in life. And the Gospel of God's grace had lifted multitudes from the sink of iniquity and the pit of degradation. Native churches had been established and Christianity was in a fair way to be naturalized and to begin to propagate itself throughout society.

But Christ was betrayed in the house of his

friends. It came to pass that the missionaries' worst enemies were from America and that their greatest difficulties were created in the home land. I do not refer now to doctrines and theories that strike at the root of Christianity. I refer to the influence of Western vice on Oriental peoples and to the blight of American commercialism and sin on all lands where Evangelical Churches have been seeking to sanctify life in all its relationships. And then here came the Great War—the most disastrous event in all history. Before the eyes of the heathen, Christian nations sought to destroy each other. To the astonishment of native Christians we proved ourselves more barbarous than those who worship false gods and who make no pretense to follow Jesus. The shame and tragedy of it all has not yet begun to be realized by Christian people.

We need to start a new crusade, a crusade in the interest of saving America. Unless we save America from her Paganism, the last hope of the world has perished. Pure individualism has not been sufficient and never will be sufficient to save human society. *The salvation of the soul must be understood to mean what it really is, the salvation of the whole life in all its human relationships. No man is saved unless he is saved as a member of society.* The teachings of Jesus must have universal applications. We must come to see not only that "our citizenship is in

heaven," but also that our citizenship is here on this earth, and that if we are not loyal Christian citizens of Tennessee and of Texas, we are not citizens in any sense of the Kingdom of Heaven. In a word, we must now at last *dare to become Christians*.

That is a remarkable letter written by some early Christian to Diogenetus:

"Christians," he says, "are not distinguishable from the rest of mankind in land, or speech, or customs. They inhabit no special cities of their own, nor do they use any different form of speech, nor do they cultivate any out-of-the-way life. . . . But while they live in Greek and barbarian cities as their lot may be cast, and follow local customs in dress and food and life generally, . . . yet they live in their own countries as sojourners only; they take part in everything as citizens and submit to everything as strangers. Every strange land is native to them, and every native land is strange. They marry and have children like every one else—but they do not expose their children. They have meals in common, but not wives. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They continue on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the laws ordained, and by their private lives they overcome the

laws. . . . In a word, what the soul is in the body, that is what Christians are in the world."

We would not speak one word by way of criticism of this magnificent picture of the Christian life which the men of that day were endeavoring to realize. To a large extent, they did realize it. They completely "out-lived" the Pagan world, and by their lives they conquered. But what I do say is, that we are bound to go far beyond the ideal set forth in this noble letter if we in our own day remain loyal to the truth as it is in Jesus. Moreover, if we do not advance beyond the attitude of self-detachment from the world, the world will be lost, and civilization itself will be doomed. These cities that we inhabit are our own cities. Our speech must be indeed another speech from that of this selfish world in which we live; our customs must be other customs. But we are not mere sojourners here in this world. Christ has redeemed it; and the world itself belongs to Him by every right. Our citizenship is in heaven; but the Ruler in the heavenly realm is Ruler on earth as well; and every day we pray: "Our Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." No human institution is profane and no human life is secular any longer to the man who has come to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus. The Home, the Church, the School,

the Farm, the Store, the Mill, the Mine, the Halls of Legislature—all belong to Jesus Christ, and all must be sanctified.

And let it be understood and recognized that the Church is not an end in itself. The purpose of Christian Missions is not to establish the Church, but to save human society. And whenever the first consideration of administrative officers and church members becomes *the salvation of the Church as an institution*, then that Church is doomed. For “whosoever will save his life shall lose it”; and *whenever an institution begins to strive chiefly to perpetuate itself as an institution, that institution has served its day and will be cast aside as an outworn garment. Whenever any Church exalts the institution above the man, that Church is condemned already. The Christianity of Christ puts always the man above the institution.*

The Church, and business, and our very lives must all be consecrated, dedicated, devoted, sanctified, and sacrificed for the sake of Christ and for a redeemed world. It will cost something; it will cost much. It will bring in a new age of Christian heroism. It will lead to the writing of a new edition of Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs.” But the law of the cross is the law of discipleship to Jesus.

A legend has it that when persecutions raged fiercely in Rome, Saint Peter thought best to

leave the city and seek safety elsewhere. But the Risen Crucified met him on the way and asked him, "*Quo vadis?*"—"Whither goest thou?"—In what direction are *we* going? Is it the life of ease and self-indulgence that we seek? Or is it the life of service and sacrifice and love? Is it a religion that quiets our own consciences and disturbs nobody in the world, that we are looking for? Or is it the religion of the men who turned the world upside down? It is written that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"; and let it be added, by way of comment, that *without the shedding of blood there is nothing that will save society*. For the law of discipleship to Jesus is the law of the Cross.

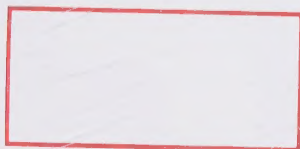
If all life is to be sanctified, we must make ready to pay the price.

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